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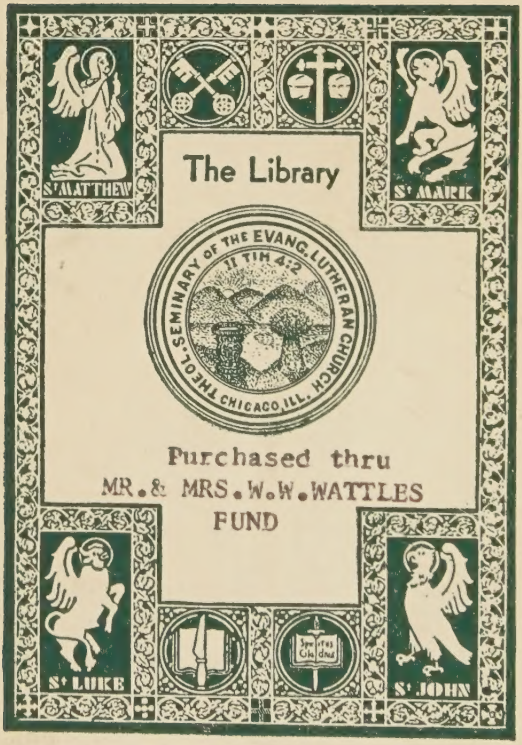
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THE PSALMISTS

The Psalmists

Essays on
their religious experience and teaching, their social background, and their place in the development of Hebrew Psalmody

by

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INTRODUCTION

THE Essays collected and published in this volume were delivered, at my invitation, as Public Lectures in Oxford during the course of the present academic term. Each contributor is responsible only for the views set forth in his own contribution. I take full responsibility for the choice of subjects, for the selection of the scholars responsible for each essay, and for the order of the Essays which, as it seems to me, has very real advantages. The Essays, apart from minor alterations, are printed here as they were delivered, with the exception of Mr. Driver's, which has been considerably expanded.

I am especially grateful to those Lecturers who had to sacrifice valuable time in travelling to Oxford to deliver them—to Principal Wheeler Robinson, to Dr. T. H. Robinson, and, more particularly, to Professor Hugo Gressmann, who journeyed from Berlin and did me the honour of giving the opening Lecture. The last-named, to the best of my belief, is the first German professor to lecture in Oxford since the war. May his delightful lecture and contribution to this volume prove a happy augury for the future co-operation of his country with ours, not only in the sphere of Biblical Criticism but in all that is best in every department of life.

The largeness of the audiences at all the Lectures proved conclusively that the Psalter is a subject which makes a remarkably wide appeal; the varied character of the same audiences afforded ample proof that the Lecturers' treatment of the subject was such as to interest not only Theological Professors

and students but also many others whose interests are far removed from those of the Theologian. Quite apart from the response in Oxford to this particular Course of Lectures, indications are not wanting that elsewhere, possibly more even than here, interest in Old Testament studies is growing, and that it is not confined solely to the circles of trained theologians.

Among this wider public, to whom these Essays are now addressed, there will probably be many who are only slightly, if at all, acquainted with (*a*) the outlines of the present position of the scientific study of the Old Testament in general, and (*b*) the attempts which have been made in the past to elucidate the problems that meet the student of the Psalter. It is, therefore, in their interests that I propose next to state very briefly the present position in regard to both of these subjects. I hope that they will be enabled thereby to understand and to appreciate the special contributions made in these Essays towards the elucidation of the faith of the Psalmists as read in the light of modern scholarship.

First then, as to the present position of Old Testament study in general. The Higher Criticism, once feared as the enemy of Revelation, has long since proved itself the ally alike of faith and of reason. It has led Old Testament theologians to formulate a theory of the gradual growth of the Hebrew Religion from lowly origins at Sinai into the strong and vigorous system of the post-exilic Judaism which forms the background of the Christian Gospels. This theory is now generally accepted in its broad outlines, however much individual scholars may differ in regard to details. So far from leading to a denial of the truth of the Divine self-revelation vouchsafed to the Hebrew people in preparation for the Incarnation, it provides a reasonable conception of the Hebrews' slowly increasing consciousness of that

preparatory revelation. It shows conclusively that to Moses there was apparent at the most only a faint glimmer of the light of God's self-revelation, a light which shone more clearly for the eighth century prophets, was reflected in the Deuteronomic Law Book of Josiah's reign, and illuminated with even more intense splendour the thought of the exilic prophets, throwing into bold relief the lights and shadows of Jewish life, and revealing the ever-increasing consciousness of the barrier of sin and also the ramifications of Jewish legalism as a result of its attempts to thrust that barrier aside. Still later some Jewish seekers after a fuller revelation of God found help in what they called 'Wisdom' as the medium between God and man, while others, the Apocalyptists, endeavoured to pierce the veil and visualise a more or less spiritual Kingdom. The end of such a process of development, and the climax of the whole, was the advent of the Perfect Mediator and his establishment of the Christian Church.

But the scientific study of the Old Testament does not stand still. It may be that, so far as great issues and fundamental principles are concerned, the purely literary or 'Higher' criticism has already made its full contribution—a great one in any case. To-day the whole field of the comparative study of religion is being explored, and from all sides data are being collected which the student of the Old Testament gladly welcomes and conscientiously sifts. Arguments are being put forward, on this hand and that, which might seem to suggest that almost all that is usually regarded as most characteristic in Hebrew Religion and in Judaism, was borrowed, often clumsily, from other religions. We know that the sacred Law Book of the Jews has close affinities, on the secular side, with the much older Code of Hammurabi. We know for certain that one at least of the Hebrew stories of Creation is of Mesopotamian origin, that both the Flood stories, and just possibly the Fall story too, have a similar derivation. The Hebrews'

Sabbath and some of their most important sacrificial terminology undoubtedly came from Babylonia. But it is even at times alleged that Monotheism, Judaism's proudest boast, is but a poor copy of that set up in Egypt by a youthful king of high ideals but of less practical ability than Moses. Jahveh, Judaism's God, is even said to be an adaptation of the Egyptian Sopd, a god of no outstanding merit; or He is regarded as an Amorite or Mesopotamian deity, for instance the Moon god of Ur of the Chaldees, or merely as the god of some tribe such as the Kenites. It is supposed that Persia supplied the idea of a world catastrophe, a resurrection, a judgment day, an angelology and demonology, while Greece contributed the idea of immortality and other presuppositions upon which Alexandrian Judaism was constructed. Again the Stoic *Anima Mundi* is called in to account for the conception of 'Wisdom' to be found in certain parts of the Jewish Wisdom literature.

Some of these alleged borrowings, such as that of Jahveh from Sopd or Hebrew Monotheism from Ikhnaton, will not stand the test of investigation; others cancel each other out. Parallels are sometimes unduly exaggerated, or are so remotely related as to be hardly worth noticing.[1] But a number—probably the larger number—of alleged borrowings are undoubtedly well substantiated.

Now, what inferences are to be drawn? Are we indeed to infer that Judaism was a patchwork of ideas derived from five or six different nations, a patchwork without design, a patchwork worthy of being put together only in a madhouse? Certainly not! Scholars will come to a very different conclusion, as it seems to me, if only they will accept St. Paul's interpretation of the altar to the Unknown God, and his belief, expressed in the Epistle to the Romans, that even the pagan religions of the Roman Empire were in their origin meant to guide men some

[1] See Mr. Driver's words of caution, pp. 109 ff. below, where he urges that 'illustration is not proof.'

steps along the path to the true God. It will be grasped that to every nation under heaven God has vouchsafed a revelation of some aspect or aspects of Himself, which has been preserved, though at times marred, in the religious literature and beliefs of practically every one of these nations. Palestine, in His good pleasure, became a great meeting-house for the reception of aspects of Him and partial truths about Him which had been apprehended and preserved in Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. The Hebrew religion, in its turn, became the repository of these truths, reinforcing them, purifying them, sublimating them, welding them together, and adding to them by means of the sublime inspiration of its greatest Prophets, Psalmists, Apocalyptists, Wisdom Writers, and even Priestly Legislators.

This constitutes an evolution and a synthesis of religious thought, an appreciation of man's gradual apprehension of God's ever-increasing self-revelation, greater far than that which we traced above in connection with the assured results of the 'Higher Criticism,' though it is not in the least contradictory of those results. But still more emphatically than any philosophy of Jewish History, based solely on literary criticism, does this demand a climax, a justification of its development—and that can only be found in God's complete and final revelation of Himself in His Only Son. If this line of thought be followed out to its logical conclusion the great outstanding phenomena that come to our notice in the comparative study of religions will be elucidated. Moreover, the Christian Church, on the one hand, will the more appreciate the significance of its Jewish origin; and the Jewish Church, on the other hand, may ultimately realise the true goal of its development and follow in the footsteps of Saul of Tarsus.

This new orientation of outlook will ultimately illuminate every department of Old Testament study. In some it may at first seem perplexing, in others ultimately revolutionary, but in all of them it is already proving itself useful and stimulating.

But how has Hebrew Psalmody, as distinct from other departments of Old Testament study, fared at the hands of modern scholars? Has it been found possible to reconstruct the main outlines of its development? Have the Higher Critics succeeded in fixing even approximately the date at which the Psalter was compiled, or the date at which individual psalms were composed? Has the Theologian thus been enabled to apply himself to the elucidation of the religious and psychological experiences of the Psalmists, their reactions to their social and political environment, and their religious and constructive ethical teaching?

Let it be understood at once that critics and Old Testament Theologians, the earliest as well as the most recent, the most radical as well as the most conservative, have indeed devoted themselves to this task, as keenly and as reverently as to other important issues in the Old Testament, and with a meticulous care for detail quite equal to that expended by them on other Biblical books. The earlier critics made courageous attempts to date various psalms and even individual verses within a given psalm, and to estimate the exact place of each in the evolution of Hebrew history and literature. Whether the fault was in a measure the critics' own we need not now discuss. But it is clear that, while by no means blind to evidences of date afforded by stylistic characteristics and by the theological presuppositions observable in each psalm, they sought primarily for allusions in the Psalter to crises in the nation's history and to outstanding events in the sphere of international politics such as Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 B. C.; or, while denying the Davidic authorship of almost every psalm, they endeavoured to connect as many as possible with the recorded experiences of other outstanding but later characters in Hebrew history, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah. When these efforts to connect the Psalms with events and personages of the pre-exilic and exilic periods met with little or no success, the next generation of

critics tried by similar methods to connect these same Psalms with crises in the *post-exilic* history of the Jewish people and with *post-exilic* heroes of the Jewish religion. Finally, nothing remained but to find the origin not merely of particular Psalms but of the Psalter as a whole in the Maccabean period. Some critics admitted the existence in our Psalter of mutilated fragments of pre-exilic hymns ; others went, and still go, so far as to deny even the existence of Psalmody of any sort in pre-exilic days. But the hypothesis of a Maccabean date for all the Psalms (or at the most for any but a small minority of them) creates more difficulties than it solves. In particular, no time is left for the successive stages through which individual psalms and minor collections of psalms passed prior to their incorporation in the Psalter, and for the translation of the latter into Greek for the use of Alexandrian Judaism. The exponents of this hypothesis seem blind to the essential meaning of the differences in style and vocabulary which are apparent in various psalms. These demand for their explanation, not a theory of their origin which dates them all within narrow limits such as the period between Judas Maccabaeus' revolt and the end of Simon's reign, but a theory which allows of the lapse of several centuries between the earliest and the latest of them. Thus critics, from the earliest days of criticism, in so far as they have sought to determine the age of any given psalm by supposedly historical allusions contained in it, have lamentably failed; and, in so far as they have ignored the literary criterion, have done less than justice to the language of the Psalter.

Are we then to acquiesce in the apparent refusal of the Psalter to yield up the secret of its origins and the mysteries of its social and political environment and of its religious and ethical background ?

Professor Gressmann's Essay, a masterly attempt to reconstruct the history of the development of Hebrew Psalmody, surely

and other alien merchants, Breasted points out,[1] were so numerous as to necessitate there being a foreign quarter in Memphis in which were temples of Baal and Astarte; and these and other Semitic divinities were recognised and worshipped by the Egyptians. A Syrian sea-captain, named Ben-Anath, succeeded in marrying his son to a daughter of no less a personage than King Ramesses II,[2] and in the reign of Merneptah another Syrian named Ben-Ozen became chief herald or marshal of the Egyptian Court. During the period of anarchy following the death or assassination of Sethos II, some Syrian, who had held a position of importance in the royal palace, actually contrived to seize the throne and occupy it for a brief space.[3] Many of the literary texts of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties teem with Canaanite loan-words, which we meet with again, four or five centuries later in the Old Testament writings. A certain number of these words were adopted permanently into the Egyptian language, as have been Latin and French words into English, and they still occur in texts of the Ptolemaic and Roman periods."

Interesting as are these important, though highly speculative, hypotheses, we must not lose sight of more pressing and still more important problems which confront the student of the Hebrew Psalmists. The *immediate background* of the extant Psalms was Palestinian, and though, in their origin, they were pre-exilic,[4] most of them, in the form in which they have been preserved, are best understood as reflecting the social and religious problems of the earlier and middle periods of post-exilic and pre-Christian Judaism. Hence the great importance which should be attached to the first part of Principal Wheeler Robinson's Essay on the Social Life of the Psalmists.

[1] Cf. Breasted, *History of Egypt*, ed. 1906, p. 448.

[2] Cf. *idem*, p. 449. [3] Cf. *idem*, p. 474.

[4] This is the view taken by all the contributors to this volume, and represents a remarkable swing of the pendulum away from the theories of Maccabaean date.

But, granted a clear understanding of the outlines of the history of the development of Hebrew Psalmody, and of the social background of the Psalmists, we must next advance to the consideration of the Psalmists' religious experience and theology. Here it seemed to me wisest that the scope of the Essays should be limited to certain great fundamental issues which underlie almost every other important aspect of the Faith of the Psalmists. It is, therefore, with these essential religious ideas that the Essays by Principal Wheeler Robinson and Dr. T. H. Robinson, forming as they do the central portion of this volume, are primarily and almost entirely concerned—the idea of God set forth by the Psalmists, the picture of their own inner life which these Psalmists reveal to us, the social conditions under which they developed this life, the hopes and the fears which they experienced in their inmost being as they pressed forward through the present torture to the final triumph in their eschatological conceptions. The treatment possible in a volume of this size is necessarily far from exhaustive, but the Psalmists' statements of their religious experiences here set forth and discussed will, it is hoped, demonstrate how worthy those poets were, nameless though they be, to contribute to the Psalter used and quoted by our Lord; that Psalter which was the climax of the Hebrew genius for religion, the epitome of Israel's spiritual experience, the prayer book of the synagogue, the hymn book of the Temple, and is still the inspiration, even in the twentieth Christian century, not only of Judaism but also of Protestant and of Catholic Christendom.

D. C. SIMPSON.

March, 1926.

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SYNOPSES OF ESSAYS[1]

I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEBREW PSALMODY

A. (pp. 1, 2) The need for a scientific investigation of the origins, history and evolution of Hebrew Psalmody.

Neglected in the past owing to apparent lack of material.

B. (pp. 2-10) But material, in point of fact, exists, and much information as to the nature and history of Psalmody, and that at various stages of its development, is to be gained from an investigation of the following :

(1) The Psalter of David.

(2) The Psalter of Solomon.

(3) Ben-Sirach xxxix. 14b–35.

(4) The Odes of Solomon.

(5) Isolated Psalms to be found in Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Maccabees. There are only a few of these in the earlier, but they are more numerous in the later of these books.

(6) The political Psalms of the Prophets. These are imitations based on Psalms *already in existence*—such political Psalms of the Prophets are discernible already in Hosea and Isaiah, but are most abundant in Deutero-Isaiah and Trito-Isaiah.

[1] Each contributor (with the exception of Professor Gressmann) is entirely responsible for the form and content of the synopsis of his own contribution.

(7) References made by the Prophets to music and song, and that not of a secular character, but music and song at the centres of sacrificial worship in pre-exilic and pre-Deuteronomic days, Amos vi. 4 ff.

(8) Amos' reference to David in connection with Psalmody, which shows that it existed as early as the time of David.

(9) Evidence of the existence of Psalmody before the time of David, *e.g.* Judg. v. 3 ff., Ex. xv. 21.

C. (pp. 10, 11) The older Psalmody was closely connected with the political events of contemporary history. But in course of time references to the latter tended more and more to be transformed into poetical retrospects of the past. The 'Psalter of David,' though not on this account necessarily post-exilic, on the whole falls into the latter category, and attempts to find references in its contents to *contemporary* personages and to *contemporary* political crises are foredoomed to failure.

D. (pp. 11-13) The older Psalmody was closely connected with the sacrificial worship and its various types of sacrifice, etc., but later it tended to be dissociated from these and to be associated with the worship of the synagogue. Royal psalms (necessaly of pre-exilic date) were intermingled with these other psalms.

E. (pp. 13-15) The 'king' or 'royal' Psalms—going back in origin to the time when the king was the sole high-priest and professional prayer.

F. (pp. 15-20) Hebrew Psalmody, and in particular the 'Psalter of David' itself, affords evidence to shew that it was connected with and had its roots in the Psalmody and other literature of the Nearer East.

(1) Illustrations of its connection with those of Babylonia.

(2) Illustrations of its connection with those of Egypt.

G. (pp. 20, 21) The extent of the dependence of the Hebrew Psalter and its contents upon the ideas and ways of expressing them current in Babylonia and Egypt.

II

THE GOD OF THE PSALMISTS

Introduction. It is difficult to generalise on this subject, because the Psalter includes Psalms from widely different dates, and the conception of God almost certainly underwent modification during the period between the earliest and the latest. The following characteristics, however, may be noted. (pp. 23, 24):

A. *Personality.* (pp. 24, 25.)

Stress on the personality of God is common to all stages of Israelite religion, and, indeed, to all forms of Semitic thought.

B. *Monotheism.* (pp. 25-8.)

This doctrine is certainly not held by all the Psalmists. In a few passages it is clear that the Psalmists deny the existence of all other gods, but their language is more often that of Monolatry than that of Monotheism. Yet they always thought of Him as supreme.

C. *Creation.* (pp. 28-31.)

The construction of the material universe is frequently ascribed to Jahveh. Further, it is held that every event in Nature is a direct and special act of His will.

D. *Dealings with Man.* (pp. 31-44.)

Jahveh (i) is omnipotent;

(ii) is moral and demands morality of men;

(iii) leaves men free. The apparent contradiction between this attitude and the doctrine of omnipotence does not seem to have occurred to the Psalmists;

(iv) is kindly, characterised by *hesed*;

(v) is 'eternal'—a word which may sometimes, but does not always, imply endless duration. The contrast, however, is strongly felt between His permanence and the evanescence of all things human;

(vi) is essentially the God of Israel, though His true home is in the heavens.

III

THE INNER LIFE OF THE PSALMISTS

Introduction. (pp. 44-8.)

The Psalms as religious lyrics; their relation to the life of Israel.
Pre-exilic elements, but a post-exilic book.
Differences of ancient from modern outlook.

I. *The Four Circles of Mediation of this Inner Life* (pp. 48-53):

(1) Devotion to the Temple.
(2) The Jewish Community.
(3) The Arena of History.
(4) The World of Nature.
(The resultant idea of God's relation to man.)

II. *The Characteristics of the Psalmists' Faith in God* (pp. 53-6):

(1) The Moral Conditions of being Jahveh's Guest.
(2) The perils of 'Pharisaism.'
(3) The joyfulness of trust.

III. *The Limitations of Faith* (pp. 56-64):

(1) The fact of death:
No doctrine of immortality.
Different attitudes to death as the universal fate.
The wrath of Jahveh.

(2) The consciousness of sin:
Relation to sickness and adversity.
The conception of forgiveness.

(3) The incidence of suffering:
The problem of moral retribution in this life.

Conclusion. (pp. 64-65.)

The simplicity and universality of the Psalms.

IV

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PSALMISTS

Introduction. (pp. 67, 68.) Impossible to find a historical background for individual Psalms ; the background of the *Book* is the post-exilic community, reflected also in the Wisdom Literature.

I. 1. *The Social Life of the Book of Proverbs* (pp. 69-76) :

Small community, politically dependent; urban and rural; commerce and agriculture.
The Jewish home. Economic life.
Social morality—bribery, sins of the flesh, slander and gossip; a morality like that of the Psalms, because largely of the same men and time.

2. *The Social Life of Ben-Sirach* (pp. 76-78) :

A keen observer of men and their occupations.
Home life. The physician.

II. *The Problem of Suffering* (pp. 78-82) :

The continuity of the pious community from Isaiah's time.
The enemies of the pious.

III. *The Corporate Personality of the Psalmists* (pp. 82-6) :

The ' I ' of the Psalms.
A consciousness combining the individual and the social not easy for the modern man to recover.
The democratisation of the prophetic consciousness.
The relation to the Servant of Jahveh.

V

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PSALMISTS

Introduction. (pp. 87, 88.) Speculation on the End always goes hand in hand with conjecture as to the Beginning; an eschatology is the natural corollary of a cosmogony, and shares its general character. It flourishes best in times of deepest distress.

A. *Characteristics of Jewish Eschatology.* (pp. 88-90.)

(i) It differs from prophecy in that the means whereby the divine judgment will be executed are abnormal.

(ii) It is universal, never merely local or national.

(iii) It involves the reign of Jahveh on earth, and frequently a Day of Judgment.

(iv) It often includes the coming of a Messiah.

(v) It involves (in its later forms) a belief in the survival of death by the individual.

B. *Reference, real or apparent, to these beliefs in the Psalter.* (pp. 90, 107.)

(i) Theophany is common, but it is only in a few passages that it is really eschatological.

(ii) Jahveh is always King, though it does not follow that His reign is apocalyptic. Mowinckel's theory that the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles involved a symbolic enthronement of Jahveh, which had an eschatological tinge.

(iii) Jahveh's appearance may be accompanied by miracles.

(iv) The conquest of Israel's enemies is a common *motif*, though a clear eschatological connotation seldom appears, even when Jahveh's victory means the subjection of all nations to Israel.

(v) Though the idea of Jahveh as Judge is common, a final judgment seldom appears.

(vi) The Messiah appears in only a few passages.

(vii) The fate of man after death is usually She'ol, but in two Psalms (xlix. and lxxiii.) it is held that death will not sever relations between righteous men and Jahveh.

C. *Conclusions.* (pp. 107, 108.)

On the whole there is very little that is strictly apocalyptic in the Psalter, though there is an eschatological background, and a good deal of the kind of material that the later eschatology used in the construction of its forecasts of the End.

VI

THE PSALMS IN THE LIGHT OF BABYLONIAN RESEARCH

Introduction. (pp. 109-13.)

Babylonian and Hebrew origins.
Extravagances of the pan-Babylonian theory.
Forced comparisons between Babylonian and Hebrew Psalms.
False conclusions drawn from forced comparisons.
Illustration no proof.

Comparisons between Babylonian and Hebrew Psalms.

1. External form. (pp. 114-22.)
   Metrical scheme:
   Parallelism; rhythm.
   Literary devices:
   Refrain; chiasmus; chain-poems; acrostics; didactic composition.
   Such devices not peculiarly Semitic.
2. Content of the Psalms. (pp. 114-72.)
   a. Language.
   Use of Babylonian to explain Hebrew text.
   Common idioms and figures of speech.
   Phrases drawn from life of every day.
   Similar expressions found among other peoples.
   Verbal resemblances.
   Religious terminology.
   Curses and imprecations.
   Possibility that races closely related may develop same phraseology independently.
   b. Theological conceptions.
   Heaven.
   Creation of the world.
   Hell.
   Parallel conceptions in pagan literature.

Nature of God:
Kingship; dwelling-place; panoply; power.
God's advisers.
God's judgments.
God's praises.
The king:
Origin; extent of dominion.
Liturgy, ceremony and prayer:
Sprinkling; God's rest; merit; answer to prayer; unanswered prayer.

Comparison with conceptions of profane writers.
Relics of polytheism:
The sun-god; the moon; demons.
Conflagration of the world.

Similar doctrines found elsewhere.
Ritual and religion:
Magic.
Various types of hymns and psalms.
Religion and morality.

Similarities in religion and morality purely superficial.

Conclusion. (pp. 172-5.)

General influence of Babylonian on Hebrew Psalms negligible.
Particular cases often due to common origin or independent reflection.
Due allowance to be made for common instincts of mankind.
Possibility of modifying any view in light of future discoveries.
Time and manner of Babylonian influence in Palestine.
Such influence more probable early than late in history.
Consequences of the Exile.
Babylonian words and ideas rarely a test of date.
Not origin but use important.

VII

THE PSALMS IN THE LIGHT OF EGYPTIAN RESEARCH

A number of Ancient Egyptian literary works (hymns and treatises) and many of the Hebrew Psalms possess certain characteristics in common, a fact which suggests that the two literatures are in some way connected. Can this theory be upheld? What is the nature of the connection? (pp. 177, 178.)

(1) Passages in the Cairo *Hymn to Amūn* and Amenophis IV's *Hymn to the Sun* compared with verses in Ps. civ. (pp. 178-82.)

(2) Many resemblances in various Nineteenth Dynasty hymns and inscriptions to the Psalms in general, such as a belief in God's justice, trust in Him in time of trouble, consciousness of sin, personal love for God and a desire for familiar intercourse with Him; God in the rôle of the Good Shepherd, His care for the poor, and His love of the humble. (pp. 182-7.)

(3) Similar resemblances in didactic works dating from the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties. (pp. 187-91.)

(4) The Hebrews may have become acquainted with the Eighteenth Dynasty hymns by way of Phoenicia: (*a*) during the reign of Solomon, or (*b*) during that of Ahab. (pp. 191, 192.)

(5) The Hebrews became acquainted with the *Proverbs of Amenemopi* about the time of Hezekiah. Ideas contained in the Nineteenth Dynasty hymns and the Ninth to Tenth Dynasty treatises may have entered Palestine at the same period and also later at the time of the Deuteronomic reform. The reform movement possibly stimulated by these influences. (pp. 192, 193.)

(6) A Semitic influence, however, is probably to be recognised in the Egyptian literary works of the Ninth to Tenth Dynasties and of the New Kingdom. (pp. 193-7.)

Conclusion. It is probable that (*a*) the Hebrew Psalmists wrote at times under influences which were, in origin, Egyptian, and (*b*) certain religious ideas—that of sin and that of the need for God's mercy—which the Egyptians emphasised, as did the Hebrews, were, in origin, Semitic rather than Egyptian. (p. 197.)

I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEBREW PSALMODY

All scientific criticism of literature presupposes and depends upon a knowledge of its history. It is surprising, therefore, to find that, though many excellent Introductions to, and Commentaries on, the Psalms have been written in England, in Germany and elsewhere, no one has written a history of the development of Hebrew Psalmody. Had it no history, no development, to be chronicled? Development and history denote change, motion, life. Must not Hebrew Psalmody have changed, moved and developed? If there was no development, there could have been no life in it. But this conclusion is absurd, and therefore we must maintain on the contrary that because there is life in it, there was also development, and Israel's Psalmody must indeed possess a history.

But why has no one written this history? The primary cause must be found in the lack of material which naturally makes it a task of the utmost difficulty. There is only one Psalter in the Bible, and how can a history of Psalmody be constructed on the basis of one little book? Still it is far more interesting to reconstruct the history of a lost literature than merely to re-edit a tale that has often been told of a literature which is extant and well known.

In setting out on a task of this kind it is necessary first to

collect all the material which is accessible, and in the second place to test it, to the fullest possible extent and in the most enlightened manner, by the canons of historical and literary criticism. The time for the *completion* of this task has not yet come, but we are on the way, and my purpose is simply to offer some suggestions which should prove helpful in this connection.

There is much more material than at the first glance might seem to exist. In addition to the Psalter of David which has a place in the Canon of the Old Testament, another Psalter, that of Solomon, has been handed down in the extra-canonical Jewish writings. There are, moreover, the famous Odes of Solomon, discovered by Rendel Harris some years ago, which, as I believe, should be regarded as a survival from a Gnostic Prayer Book and as the work of an author who was imbued with ideas drawn from Pagan as well as Jewish and Christian sources. The Psalter of David belongs to the fifth century B.C., the Psalter of Solomon to the first century B. C., and the Odes of Solomon to the beginning of the second century A. D. If we compare these three books, we have a great deal of material for the reconstruction of the history of the Psalms in ancient Israel, in the early days of Judaism, in Maccabean times and in the period of Christian syncretism. The Psalter of David contains truths of eternal value set forth in noble, and yet simple, language, words fitly spoken like apples of gold in baskets of silver (Prov. xxv. 11). It is, therefore, not an accident that the Psalter of David has become the canonical prayer-book of the Jewish Bible and also the classical prayer-book of the whole Christian world. Doubtless the hymns of the Greek tragedians are sometimes as beautiful as the Davidic psalms, but on the whole they are understood only after a careful study of the difficult originals. The author of the Psalter of Solomon, poor as he is in ideas, colourless in his expression of them, with his poetic Muse stifled by reflection, looks like a weak imitator. The decay of Hebrew Psalmody had already set in when he wrote.

This Psalter of Solomon is not the only survival of Psalmody which is a product of the period of Hellenism. Let me take an example from Jesus ben Sirach (39, 14b–35). In the beginning of one of his many collections of proverbs he sings—no, *he writes!*[1]—a hymn in praise of creation. It reads in the translation of Box and Oesterley :

Lift up your voice and sing together,
And bless the Lord for all His works.
O magnify His name,
And acknowledge Him with praise,
With songs of the harp and of stringed instruments;
And thus shall ye say, with a shout—

So he begins in the ancient manner. But this ' Introduction '[2] is only a matter of style; for in the ' Conclusion ' he writes:

Therefore from the beginning I was assured,
And when I had considered it, *I set it down in writing*:
The works of God are all good,
They supply every need in its season.
None may say: This is worse than that;
For everything availeth in its season.
And now ring out whole-heartedly
And praise the name of the Holy One!

The main body of his hymn contains a great mass of thought and reflection on its *motif*:

The works of God are all good,
And supply every need in its season.
None may say: This is worse than that,
For everything availeth in its season.

And the chief point of all his reflections is summed up in the sentence: God's works prove good to the good; for the evil

[1] *Real* ' Psalms ' are intended for *singing* ; this is written to be *read.*

[2] A Psalm consists of three parts : (*a*) Introduction ; (*b*) Main *motif,* and (*c*) Conclusion.

they are turned to evil. Surely it is no psalmist who is singing here, but a scribe who is writing and setting forth his wisdom in the form of a hymn. Moreover the style and spirit of this psalm are the style and spirit of the Psalter of Solomon. We do not hear the strong beating of his heart, we sense only the pallor of his thoughts. He is not expressing his feelings of thankfulness, but only reflecting on his expression of them. What a contrast with the Davidic Psalter! Times have changed, and with their change have banished the poetry of Psalmody.

The gaily coloured Odes of Solomon are late fruits. They are indeed fascinating like hyper-modern painting, but a similar process of decay is also apparent in their poetry.

In addition to these Psalters we must draw attention to the isolated psalms preserved, outside the Psalter of David, in the Old Testament. Hebrew historians sometimes inserted psalms into the context of their narratives. This habit grew with time. Chronicles and Maccabees are full of such citations, but they had already found a place in Samuel and Kings. The custom began, as it seems, in the later period of the Judaean kingdom, or, let us say, with the Deuteronomists. It was a result of the influence of the Prophets. In early times it was restricted in the main to edifying legends such as those of Hannah, David, Hezekiah, Jonah. Later on the practice was extended and applied to a larger area of history, changing it more and more into 'midrash.' It all provides us with illustrations of true psalms, and we are enabled thereby to compare both the differences in the form and also the variety of the contents of such psalms in the various periods of the development of Psalmody.

A greater amount of material, and that of more importance for our purpose, is found in the Prophetical Literature. The psalms of the Prophets are to be distinguished from the lyrics of the Psalter; for the former are not genuine but imitative

psalms. They were not intended for the Hymn-book of the Community, and were not used in the Services of the Community; if they were intended to be sung, it was not the contemporary but the future Community which was to sing them, perhaps even then not in reality but only in thought. The significant issue is this: they always form part of an oracle, as is natural in prophecy. The Prophets, when announcing the future, when uttering promises or threats, usually preferred to do so in oracles; only rarely did they employ other forms borrowed from the lyrics. The enrichment of the Prophetical Literature by the employment of the lyric increased in later times. Pre-exilic prophecies afford only a few examples of it; Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah, on the other hand, are full of it. The best examples are to be found in Deutero-Isaiah. Doubtless he was a prophet, not a psalmist, but no other prophet resembles a psalmist as he does. He could not speak without employing the forms of Psalmody; he was at once a prophet and a lyric poet. Whenever the name of Jahveh [1] occurred, a hymn full of pious enthusiasm burst forth from his heart. If he deplored the sufferings of the pious and threatened their enemies, he had perforce to utter a psalm of lamentation, for Psalmody was the very life of his soul. These imitations of Psalmody by the Prophets are valuable in themselves, but they are also of especial importance for our purpose: they presuppose the existence of genuine psalms at the time of their own composition, and give us much information as to the historical background and as to the development of an otherwise lost literature. Let us take some examples. Israel prays in Hos. vi. 1–3:

[1] ['Jahveh', 'Jahweh', 'Jahve', etc., are attempts to express in English the true pronunciation of the Divine name—'Jehovah' being generally agreed to be incorrect. 'Jahveh' appears throughout the present work, but it should be understood that the choice of this rather than 'Jahweh', etc., is my responsibility, not that of the various contributors to the volume, and is made in the interests of uniformity. D.C.S.]

Come, let us return to Jahveh,
For He has torn us, He will heal us,
He has wounded, He will bind us up.
After two days will He revive us,
On the third day
He will raise us
To live under His care
Let us know Jahveh,
Let us make haste to know Him,
For He will come to us as the rain,
As the winter-rain watering the land.

The Israel of the future will return to Jahveh, will in repentance confess her faith in the great physician, and will profess the knowledge of God. This section, in view of its form and contents, may be called a psalm of lamentation, or, more exactly, of repentance. It must be borne in mind that this prayer of the community is an imitation of the prayer of an individual such as is Ps. li. In the background we see the picture of a man sick unto death, even one whose life has left him; but 'after two days' or 'on the third day' God awakes him from the dead. This is an allusion to the dying and rising of Adonis; it is, as it happens, an allusion which in its obviousness and directness is unparalleled in the whole Old Testament. After the Exile orthodox Judaism did not tolerate any survivals whatsoever of allusions to Adonis, and there are no traces of him in the Psalter of David.

We have so far made considerable progress in our investigation. In the time of Hosea psalms were in existence, and these psalms had some features which are not found in our Davidic Psalter. The sick man appealed to the fate of Adonis in order that he might rise, as Adonis had risen, from the dead: hence the reference to the rain of the fertility-god and perhaps to the knowledge of 'God.' Hosea, at any rate, was satisfied to set Jahveh in the place which Adonis had occupied.

Another example is to be found in Isaiah ii. 3 (=Micah iv. 2):

Come, let us go to Jahveh's hill,
To the house of Jacob's God,
That He may instruct us in His ways,
To walk upon His paths.
For instruction comes from Sion,
And from Jerusalem Jahveh's word.

These words remind us of Ps. cxxii.: 'I was glad when they said unto me: Let us go into the house of Jahveh.' The beginning is almost the same in both—the call to a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But in the psalm the pilgrimage song is that of an individual Jew; in Isaiah it is that of all the nations. In the psalm the reference is to the present, but in Isaiah to the future. That this is so is apparent from the 'Introduction':

In after days it shall be
That Jahveh's hill shall rise,
Towering over every hill
And higher than the heights.
To it shall all the nations stream,
And many a folk shall sing.

Doubtless the prophet was imitating a contemporary pilgrimage-psalm, and projected its thought into the last days when a great community of proselytes were to come to Jerusalem to learn Jahveh's word there. As the procession approached the Temple and stood in the gateway, the question used to be asked (according to Ps. xv.): 'Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?' and the chorus would answer: 'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart,' and other ethical duties of the individual were added. In a similar way, but with a difference, the prophet announces the ethical duties of the nations, stressing that of maintaining unbroken peace in the world of God. What Isaiah uttered in the form of a pilgrimage-psalm was, in point of fact, a poem with a political *motif*, describing the highest ideal of religious politics. Such a

combination of politics and ethics, or of politics and religion, is true to the character of the Prophets; for this reason prophetic psalms are always political ones.

Perhaps this section (Is. ii. 2–4) is not the work of Isaiah. But even so, there are examples enough, which I need not now enumerate, abundantly proving that before the Exile there were psalms which the Prophets knew and imitated. All the many allusions to music in connection with sacrifices presuppose psalms; for a performance of merely instrumental music is nowhere attested. The oracle of Amos uttered against the rich (vi. 4 ff.) is of the greatest interest. In Moffatt's translation:

> Lolling on their ivory divans,
> Sprawling on their couches,
> [1] Dining off fresh lambs out of the flock
> And fatted veal out of the stall,
> Crooning to the music of the lute,
> Composing airs like David himself,
> Lapping wine by the bowlful,
> And using for ointment the best of the oil—
> With never a single thought
> For the bleeding wounds of the nation.

Amos is here describing a sacrificial meal held in honour of the God and as an act of communion with him. The main point in the offering of lambs and calves was the common meal which followed the slaughter of the animals. Hence the denunciatory dictum of the prophets: offering is a mere meal. The Hebrew words used by Amos for 'banquet' and 'bowl' are taken from the technical terminology of sacrificial worship. The offering of the best of the oil was due to Jahveh. Doubtless the enjoyment of luxurious meals led to careless frivolity in the political sphere (and surely in regard to ethics and religion too), but it is undeniable that they had at any rate a definitely sacrificial

[1] 'Cut off' (Moffat).

character. Consequently the music was essentially connected with the sacrifices; the airs composed by David were not those of the drinking-songs of a secular banquet, but sacred songs like the psalms. In my estimation (though most critical scholars of the Old Testament think otherwise) Amos knew of David as a psalmist. Consequently it is necessary to trace back the history of the Psalms to David himself.

But why should we halt there? Was David the creator of Psalmody? Not only from Amos, but from many other additional sources of information we find that Psalmody was closely connected with certain offerings and rites which are mentioned from time to time in the Psalms. Careful examination will show exactly how various types of psalms were connected with various kinds of sacrificial worship. For instance, the hymns of thanksgiving were connected with the thank-offerings; the Hebrew word is the same in both cases. This observation suffices to indicate that, if psalms were connected with Israel's sacrificial worship, Psalmody was as old as sacrificial worship itself. And there is no lack of examples of this in the period before David. The song of Deborah is generally recognised as contemporary with the period of the Judges. It is not a hymn from beginning to end, but it begins as a hymn:

> Hear, O ye kings,
> Give ear, O ye princes!
> I will sing to Jahveh,
> Will hymn to Jahveh, God of Israel:
> At thine advance from Seir, O Jahveh,
> Upon thy march from Edom's field,
> Earth shaked, skies quaked,
> Clouds dropped water,
> Mountains trembled before Jahveh,
> Before Jahveh, God of Israel. (Judges v. 3 ff.)

So the poet in the most ancient times, when addressing himself to the Hebrew kings on political matters, began with

the praise of the Lord, and, after the short 'Introduction,' the theophany of Sinai's God, the God who shakes the earth and the sky, became the theme of his hymn. This *motif* was often repeated in later days, as in Ps. xviii. or xcvii. or Hab. iii., though not as often as we might expect. The painting of the scene was mythological and in harmony with primitive fantasy, but it was too mythological for the aesthetic standards of a later age.

The song of Miriam (Ex. xv. 21) is perhaps even more ancient. In spite of its brevity it is a complete hymn, and it has the same form as do the later hymns of the Psalter; after the introductory demand for the expression of praise, the praise itself follows:

Sing ye to Jahveh;
For He rose up in His height,
Hurling horse and chariot
Into the sea.

If this song was not actually composed amid the stirring events by the Red Sea, it is at any rate *very* old; for the longer hymn of later date which precedes it may emanate from the time of Solomon. The destruction of the Egyptians became a favourite theme of the passover-hymns which were sung at the passover-feast in remembrance of the day when Israel came forth out of the land of Egypt.

Thus an abundance of testimony bears witness to the fact that psalms existed before the Exile, even before David.

Now let us try to state some further characteristics of the development of Hebrew Psalmody.

1. As we have seen from the Songs of Deborah and Miriam, and also from the political psalms of the Prophets, Psalmody in early times was more closely connected with historical events than it was in later times. Whereas the older hymns, though short, described *contemporary* history; in hymns of later times, on the other hand, contemporary history was seldom mentioned; instead *past* history was dwelt on. Our Davidic Psalter is

devoid of reference to the Psalmists' own period; the latter is gloomy and dark, and therefore the singers prefer to live in the past. From this point of view it is *a priori* a mistake to try to combine these psalms with definite historical persons or situations; the twilight of our psalms should certainly never be transformed into full daylight, for this would be a violation of their essential style. Most of the psalms of the Psalter of David are devoid of historical references, a mark of comparatively late date, but not necessarily a proof of post-exilic origin.

2. The older psalms are more closely connected with the ritual of Divine Service than are the later ones. The religious festivals, the sacrifices and rites, the whole of the public and private sacrificial worship, are inconceivable if the sacred ceremonial was not accompanied by psalms. Word and ritual-act cannot be separated in the sphere of religion any more than in that of magic. When the thank-offering was offered the giver naturally and necessarily sang a psalm of thanksgiving, and this latter was based on words which explained his offerings to the God.

Or take another example. When a sick man came to the priest-confessor to be purged with hyssop, he used to say: 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean' (Ps. li. 2). Cleansing means forgiving, and on that account the purging with hyssop and the confession of sins are closely associated with each other. It was from this tiny germ that the penitential psalms were evolved.

Take next some examples of professions of innocence: 'I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Jahveh' (Ps. xxvi. 6). From Deut. xxi. we learn that 'If one be found slain, lying in the field, and it be not known who has slain him, then the elders of the city which is next to that field, shall take a heifer, bring it down to a wady with running water and shall break the heifer's neck there. And they shall wash their hands over the heifer saying: "Our hands

have not shed this blood neither have our eyes seen it." ' Thus they removed the guilt of innocent blood by a ritual act accompanied by semi-magical words which described and explained the ceremony. Here then we have the origin of the psalms of innocence, for the Psalmist professes his innocence:

I have looked always to thy love,
I have lived loyal to thee ;
I never joined false men,
I would not be seen with hypocrites.
I hate the wicked party,
I never would join the ungodly.

And in the certainty of his purity he exclaims:

Examine me, O Jahveh, and prove me,
Try my reins and my heart ! (Ps. xxvi. 3 ff.)

He is convinced that however closely God may examine him, He will find no guile in him.

All psalms, then, were originally connected with the sacrificial worship, were connected, that is, with the sacrifices, feasts, public ceremonies or private rites.

We have now reached an important stage in our reconstruction of Psalmody. The Psalter is not a great collection of homogeneous prayers, but contains different types of psalms varying in essential form and in the nature of their contents. First of all it is necessary to separate the different types from each other. A history of Psalmody can only be written by recognising and investigating the different species of psalms; hymns of the people, thanksgivings of the individual, public lamentations, individual prayers sometimes confessing sin, sometimes professing innocence, royal songs, and so on. If we pay attention to the allusions to the sacrificial worship and ritual, we shall discover some arresting facts. In Ps. cxlix. 6 we read:

Let the hymns of God be in their mouth,
And a two-edged sword in their hand.

There can be no doubt that this psalm was, as Gunkel argues, sung by performers during the sword-dance.

But it would be an unwarranted exaggeration to assume that all the psalms in the Davidic Psalter have retained their original association with the sacrificial worship. Some of them at any rate have lost their connection with the Temple, have even been made a vehicle for the expression of opposition to it and of invective against the sacrifices. All this was, doubtless, due to the influence of the prophets. The numerous psalms of the Jewish colonies were intended originally not for public worship but for private edification; it was only afterwards that they were received into the prayer-book of the community, and that the prayers for the king were added—this latter addition being a sign of pre-exilic date. Prior to the Exile Jewish colonies, perhaps consisting of merchants, must have been in existence, especially in North Arabia.

Here then we have an important stage in the development of Hebrew Psalmody. It is true that, though it renounced the sacrificial worship, even that of the Temple, it could not entirely break away from festival and ceremonial. But all the same, the change of its orientation from the sacrificial worship of the Temple to the services of the synagogue was a great step forward in the history of the Jewish people. Psalms connected with the sacrificial worship of the Temple changed into ecclesiastical psalms of the synagogue. They formed henceforth a spiritual liturgy adequate to the worship of God in spirit and in truth.

3. David was recognised as a Psalmist even as early as the time of Amos. Our Biblical Psalter is ascribed to David, the extra-canonical Psalter to Solomon. But so far as individual psalms are concerned there can be no doubt that these ascriptions are unhistorical. We have now to enquire why these Psalters were so named. In the Davidic Psalter we find not only prayers for the king, *e.g.* Ps. xx., but also prayers uttered by the king,

as *e.g.*, Ps. xviii. It may be that the king himself did not compose this psalm. Someone else may have composed it in his name, and thus the king is represented as speaking of himself in the first person. Ps. xviii. is the hymn of a king. The king, however, was not David, as the superscription states, but a later king of Jerusalem, for at the end of the hymn 'David and his seed' are mentioned. There are examples of royal psalms also in Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt: psalms of Nebuchadrezzar, Ashurbanipal and Ikhnaton. Doubtless the kings used such psalms in worship, and they did so because they were the high-priests of their people. In the ancient Oriental world every king was a priest, just as he was in Jerusalem from Melchizedek's time onwards. In the history of Israel there are many examples of the king's priesthood; we need only mention Solomon's dedication of his Temple. Probably too the title 'Messiah' (*mashîaḥ*), applied to a reigning king, designates him as the priest-king. Consequently he alone prayed for the people; all public prayers were originally offered only by him.

If the king represented the principal type of professional offerers of prayer, many hints of this should have survived, and, indeed, there is a mass of material which has not yet been sufficiently explored. A great many phrases in the psalms originally referred to the king, and it was only afterwards that they were altered so as to include the faithful in general. The best, and indeed an indisputable, example is to be found in the prayer: '*Hide me under the shadow of thy wings*,' which occurs only four times in our Psalter. Wings of Jahveh are never heard of, but we know of the wings of the sun-god which hide the king under their shadow. This figure originated in Egypt where the hawk of Horus stretched out his wings over the king. We also meet the same representation of the divine guardian in the reliefs of Phoenicia, Asia Minor, Assyria, Persia and even in Turfan. Art and literature are closely connected, and so figure and phrase penetrated into Phoenicia and Palestine

from Egypt. Just as the lower classes appropriated the pyramids, once the privilege of the kings, so too they took possession of the wings of the God which once had covered only the king under their shadow.

The stage of development in which the king was the sole or the principal professional offerer of prayer had passed before the composition of our Psalter. There are only a few psalms concerned with the reigning king, not a single one is, as is often wrongly supposed, a psalm of the Messianic king. All the psalms in which the king is mentioned are important evidences of the pre-exilic date of Psalmody. The attempts made to date the royal psalms in the Maccabean period have been in vain. I am convinced that there are no Maccabean psalms whatsoever in the Davidic Psalter: it had been completed long before the middle of the second century B. C. Moreover the nearest parallels to the phrases of the royal psalms are to be found in the worlds of ancient Egypt and ancient Babylonia, not in the phraseology of the Court of the Hellenistic age, and the differences between the phraseology and style of these different ages are very great. In short, while the majority of the psalms may be of post-exilic origin, many others are pre-exilic. This view is supported by another consideration: there are only a few psalms (*e.g.* Pss. i., xix., cxix.) in praise of the written law of Moses, and all these are of later date. Ps. i., though the first psalm in the Psalter, is not typical of the whole.

4. Psalmody is as old as Israel's religion, even older than Moses. It apparently had its roots in the ancient literature of the Nearer East. At any rate the history of its development must be studied in the light of that literature, and its relationship to that literature must be emphasised at this point in our investigation.

Let me take an example from a royal psalm:

> He shall have dominion from sea to sea
> And from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth.
> (Ps. lxxii. 8.)

The greatness of a kingdom was indicated by naming the extreme boundaries ('from sea to sea'), or by tracing a circle from a centre ('from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth'). But these two phrases do not fit the geography of Palestine. There is only one sea west of Palestine and no sea whatsoever on the east, and the centre is not the Euphrates but the Jordan. The two phrases must have originated in Babylonia. Indeed Nebuchadrezzar says that 'he called up the entirety of the nations from the upper sea to the under sea,' *i.e.* from the Persian Gulf in the east to the Mediterranean Sea in the west; and Adad-nirari subdued, as he says, 'all the lands from the Euphrates to the great ocean' surrounding the earth. There can be no doubt that these expressions penetrated to Palestine from Babylonia. But it might be argued (by those who minimise the connection of Hebrew with Babylonian Psalmody) that *a king* necessarily has relations with other peoples, and that this fact is in itself sufficient to explain the traces of an international outlook and of seemingly Babylonian and Egyptian features in the royal psalms. As an answer to that objection it will be well to examine some other types of Psalmody. Are there, or are there not, some further hints elsewhere of the existence of the influence of Babylonia upon Hebrew Psalmody?

Look at Ps. xix., where we read: 'In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.' It is true that the Hebrew poet may have understood the text as referring to the actual orb of the sun. But originally the 'sun' was not the mere disc but a god. For only a person has a tabernacle, only a person can be 'as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,' and only a person 'rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.' Now we know from the tablet of Nabu-apalidin (860 B. C.) that the Assyrian sun-god Shamash had a tabernacle in the sea; moreover he was a bridegroom, his bride being called Aia and dwelling in that

tabernacle. When he comes forth out of the sea, he runs 'a race' and 'rejoiceth as a strong man,' for he overcomes the enemies or demons with whom he fights on the way. There are many seal-cylinders representing the fighting sun-god. For this reason it is clear that the Hebrew psalm is inspired by an Assyrian psalm.

The first part of Ps. xix. is traceable to the same origin:

> The heavens declare the glory of God;
> And the firmament sheweth his handywork.
> Day unto day uttereth speech,
> And night unto night sheweth knowledge.
> There is no speech nor language,
> Where their voice is not heard.
> Their line is gone out through all the earth,
> And their words to the end of the world.

It can hardly be doubted that we have here an allusion to the celestial harmony of spheres well known from Plato, but not as yet attested by Babylonian or Assyrian writers. Certainly the idea is the product of astral religion, and must therefore be of Babylonian or Assyrian origin. The presence in Hebrew psalms of such allusions to Babylonian beliefs is perhaps explained by the circumstances of the reign of Manasseh and by his policy. He inclined to an Assyrian type of worship, especially to the worship of Shamash, to whom a chapel was erected at that time in the precincts of Jahveh's Temple in Jerusalem. Naturally priests of Shamash must have ministered there, and following the Assyrian custom hymns to Shamash must have been sung there.

But it would be a mistake to look only to Babylonia. Babylonian influence in Palestine was crossed with that of Egypt. Indeed traces of Egyptian influence also appear in the Hebrew psalms. Ps. cx., a well-known and undeniable example, is a royal psalm:

> Sit thou at my right hand,
> Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

There are several Egyptian reliefs which represent the king in the midst of the gods; and there are other reliefs, such as the famous one of Amenophis II, which represent the king as setting his feet on the neck of his enemies. He is sitting on his throne, and his enemies are his footstool, a picture which is implied in the language of the Hebrew psalmist. So too there are, in the royal psalms, many other examples of the international character of their style. But the same fact is observed in the investigation of hymns of a different type, above all in one particular hymn.

Ps. civ. is often compared with the hymn of Ikhnaton, the Egyptian 'heretical' king, or, a better description of him, the 'earliest religious individuality we know in history.' That Amenophis IV (about 1400 B. C.) was a monotheistic thinker can hardly be denied, and we expect *a priori* that the beauty of his wonderful hymn to the sun-god would make an impression upon all who learned to know it—and that too in foreign lands, like Phoenicia which was an Egyptian province at that period. Indeed, there are striking parallels between Ikhnaton's hymn and Ps. civ. The Psalmist says :

> Thou makest darkness, and it is night:
> Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
> The young lions roar after their prey,
> And seek their meat from God.
> The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together,
> And lay them down in their dens.
> Man goeth forth unto his work
> And to the labour until the evening.

The statement in Ps. civ. to the effect that during the night the beast of the forest works and man sleeps, whereas during the day man works and the beast sleeps, is noted in the hymn of Ikhnaton. Moreover, the surprising conception of the roaring lions as praying and seeking their meat from God is also found in the psalm of Ikhnaton, only in the latter the birds praise

God with their wings unfolded in the attitude of prayer. But there is no need to confine our examination of the affinities of Ps. civ. to its points of contact with the hymn of Ikhnaton. We must not forget that similar ideas and images were current also in other Egyptian psalms that were rich in expressions of love of nature and in glorification of the God Who preserves the world. Without, therefore, looking further into Ikhnaton's hymn, we may enquire whether Ps. civ. contains any traces of a general Egyptian background. We have in this psalm a description of 'the great sea':

> . . . this great and wide sea,
> Wherein are things creeping innumerable,
> Both small and great beasts,

and it seems to me that the author did not mean the Mediterranean Sea—where the small and great beasts are to be expected. He meant the Nile, which is often called 'a sea' in the Old Testament. And this hypothesis is confirmed by what is said in the words which follow:

> There go the ships, there is that leviathan,
> Whom thou hast made to play therein,

or more probably 'to play therewith,' *i.e.* with the leviathan. The reference is to the crocodile, as in Job xl.; to indulge in play with the crocodile is worthy of a God like Jahveh, who is the heir of an Egyptian god such as 'Horus on the crocodiles.' In the same psalm (*v.* 16) we read that Jahveh has planted the cedars of Lebanon; surely they were originally planted by Adonis the Baal of Lebanon. When we read that 'the high hills are a refuge of the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies,' here again our first thought is of the Lebanon and the wild beasts there. These and other features point to Phoenicia, and therefore we urge that the archetype of this psalm was of Egyptian origin, even though it reached Palestine by way of Phoenicia. Phoenician life and thought, and especially

Phoenician religion, were permeated by Egyptian influence. Egyptian hymns to Amon Re or Aton was just as natural in Phoenicia as were temples of the Egyptian state-god. The relations between Phoenicia and Jerusalem went back to the time when Solomon brought the workmen of Hiram to his capital. Just as the Temple of Jerusalem was modelled on an Egyptian-Phoenician sanctuary, so behind Ps. civ. we sense an Egyptian-Phoenician original, not specifically the psalm of Ikhnaton (as is often urged), but more generally an Egyptian psalm in Phoenician guise.

There was then, as all these examples indicate, a common basis underlying all the Psalmody of the Nearer East. The extent to which the Hebrew psalms have their roots in those of Babylonia or Egypt is a matter for research in the future. There is no reason for doubting that the psalms of the Old Testament have been influenced by the psalms of other nations, and it would be exceedingly interesting to state some of the conditions which led to this influence. For instance, the Hebrew psalmists in all probability learned from the Egyptian singers to import into their hymns not only mythological *motifs*, but also a real love of nature. The oldest mythological *motif* in the hymns was that of the creation of the world, and it (together with the creation-myth) probably originated in Babylonia. The *motif* of the divine care of the world was a later idea, which made its way into Palestinian Psalmody under the influence of Egypt.

To sum up. We have seen that the Psalmody of Israel had a long history. It was connected with, and influenced by, the older Psalmody of the Nearer East, especially that of Babylonia and Egypt. But Israelite Psalmody also exhibits a development of its own. At first it was closely related to the various acts, ceremonies, feasts and rites of public and private worship. Then it became divorced from this, and underwent changes of a more spiritualising character, sometimes even ranging itself in

opposition to the sacrificial worship. At first it was full of references to the concrete facts of contemporary history; later it tended rather to fix its gaze on the past. In earlier times we have the warm, living pulsing of the heart, in later times more of abstract and chilly reflection on religious ideas. In the prophetic period we found that the genuine psalms of sacrificial religion were imitated in the political utterances of the prophets. Last of all came the period when the psalms were not uttered but written.

We have, therefore, an abundance of material for the reconstruction of the history of Israelite Psalmody. Much has been done already, but much more remains to be done. I hope that English scholars will work hand in hand with German scholars to the same end—to recognise the truth, that is to recognise God.

HUGO GRESSMANN.

II

THE GOD OF THE PSALMISTS

There is no book in the Bible about which it is harder to generalise than the Book of Psalms. It is a compilation of the work of many authors, each with his own experience and his own point of view, affected, as such researches as those of Professor Gressmann have shewn us, by many influences from outside Israel, and the effects have been unevenly distributed. The various pieces in it seem to date from widely separated periods, and there are but few of the poems as to whose dates even a majority of students are at all agreed. On the one hand we have the traditional dates deduced from the titles which stand at the head of so many, on the other hand we have that over-eagerness to attribute a large number of Psalms to a late period, which was characteristic of Cheyne and of Duhm. Again the pendulum is swinging back, and we find scholars of the rank and brilliance of Gressmann and Mowinckel throwing Psalms back into the pre-exilic period—though for very different reasons.

But whether we put some of the Psalms before the Exile and some after the return, or whether we assign the majority of them to a comparatively late period, there is, in any case, a long interval lying between the extreme limits. And none of us doubts to-day that wherever that period is to be placed, it covers a time of gradual change and growth. Partly through

the natural human instinct for advance and partly through the pressure of external circumstances, men's ideas about God, His relation to the world and to themselves, underwent modification, and it is impossible for us to treat the whole as if its theology were homogeneous. Add to all this uncertainty the tendencies to follow the new lines indicated by the comparative study of the ancient religions of the East, the grouping and classification of the Psalms according to their nature and subject-matter, and it becomes obvious that any attempt we make to describe a doctrine or an attitude common to the whole Book must be hedged about with cautions and qualifications, and frequently modified to suit special cases.

One statement, however, may be made of all the Psalms, and not of them alone but of the whole Old Testament, and indeed of all Semitic religion. God is always a person, and, even though the conception of the powers and functions of His personality may to some extent vary, though it may at times be more than tinged with anthropomorphism and at others rise to great heights of spirituality, yet there is an unconscious but intense stress upon it, and no view of God can safely be ascribed to any of the Psalmists if it fails to base itself on this primary feature. A person is self-determining, and the higher the grade of personality the greater the degree of self-determination and the less the external control to which it has to submit, the more insignificant the limitations by which it is bounded. Not only so, but with the idea of personality there must always be associated some ability to control external objects or even other persons. It may well have been the power to direct the movements of other objects which, in the early childhood of the race, first brought home to infant humanity the distinction between itself and the inanimate world, and it is a significant fact that even to the Hebrew mind life is always associated with the power to move and to make other things move. Life is something which is ascribed alike to man and to the animals,

and is denied alike to the vegetable and to the mineral worlds.

Further than this we can hardly carry our generalisations. We certainly cannot say without reservation that the theology of the Psalms is monotheistic. It is true that we have from time to time expressions in the Psalter which make it clear that to the writers themselves Jahveh was *sui generis*. On the one side stands all creation and on the other side the Creator. He is alone, and there is none other of His genus; man, though sharing personality with Him, and living in virtue of divine inspiration—the *rûªch* of Jahveh—yet belongs to creation, and there is no other God to stand by Jahveh's side or even to lie at His feet. Thus one poet sings:

> [1] Those that regard vain idols Thou hatest,
> But I—I trust upon Jahveh. (xxxi. 6.)

The 'idols' are empty things, things without substance or final reality, less real, it may be, than those who worship them. Or this:

> Our God is in heaven;
> Whatsoever He willeth, He doeth.
> Their idols are silver and gold,
> Made by the hands of men.
> Mouths have they, but they speak not:
> Eyes have they, but they see not:
> Ears have they, but they hear not;
> Noses have they, but they smell not:
> Hands have they, but they feel not:
> Feet have they, but they walk not:
> There is no sound in their throat. (cxv. 2–7)

Or the similar passage in Ps. cxxxv. 15 ff., where, however, it is

[1] Throughout both lectures I have quoted from Professor M'Fadyen's translation (published by J. Jacks), which is very successful in preserving the stately rhythm of Hebrew poetry. I have, however, substituted 'Jahveh' for 'Jehovah' and 'the Lord' where the tetragrammaton occurs in the original text.

possible that the verses in question are a kind of appendix added by a later hand than that of the original poet. And how much else is there in the Book of Psalms which bears this unmistakable stamp of pure monotheism? Very little.

It is, of course, but seldom that a Psalm can be regarded as a theological treatise. We must not expect, therefore, to find the whole of the poet's doctrine upon the surface. He is addressing a single God, whether in praise, prayer, supplication or penitence, and there is no need, as a rule, that other gods should be even mentioned, unless it be to draw the contrast between them and Jahveh. The result is, that the language of monolatry is frequently indistinguishable from that of monotheism. The average reader would have no reason to guess that behind the language actually used there lies an implicit belief in the existence of other gods, like Jahveh in nature, though, perhaps, below Him in status and power. Yet there is enough evidence to show that this is a commoner attitude than that of the pure monotheist. We may refer to the following passages:

None of the gods is like Thee, O Jahveh,
Nor are any works like Thine. (lxxxvi. 8.)
For who in the skies may compare with Jahveh?
Who is like to Jahveh among the gods? (lxxxix. 6.)
For Jahveh is a great God,
And a great King above all gods. (xcv. 3.)
For great is Jahveh, and worthy all praise;
Awful is He, above all gods. (xcvi. 4.)
Yea, I know that Jahveh is great,
That our Lord is above all gods. (cxxxv. 5.)

Here and elsewhere (*e.g.* lxxxii. 1; xcvii. 9) the thought of the worshipper is beyond dispute. He admits, perhaps even glories in, the existence of other deities besides Him whom he is directly addressing, because to him his own God, Jahveh, is supreme over all. It is, from some points of view, a greater thing to be

the master and Lord of all gods than to be the master and Lord of lower orders of being only.

I have purposely omitted from the selections I have read certain passages which speak of the 'sons of the Elim,' *e.g.* xxix. 1, because it is not clear that the term in these verses necessarily implies actual gods. The beings referred to may belong to inferior order, and possibly are sometimes no more than angels. On the other hand, the use of the phrase in lxxxix. 6 makes it perfectly clear that it might mean actual gods, *i.e.* beings who were of the same species as Jahveh, though less powerful specimens of that species.

It will be noted that the references of this latter class, suggesting a doctrine of the supremacy but not a doctrine of the uniqueness of Jahveh, are by no means confined to those parts of the Psalter which have usually been recognised as comparatively early. Some of them come from those few Psalms which seem to have been added as a kind of appendix to the Elohistic Psalter, others are actually taken from Bks. IV and V. Whilst it would be widely admitted that these later collections contain Psalms which are—shall we say pre-Maccabean ?—such as Ps. cxxxvii., which even Duhm carries back to the early part of the Exile, yet taken as a whole it seems probable that they represent a later phase of Israelite Psalmody. It is interesting to find that in some of these Psalms we have a view of God which is earlier in point of development than Is. xl.–lv., though it is not necessarily earlier in time. But, slight as is the evidence to be drawn from this phenomenon, it does help to strengthen the case for those who believe that the tendency has been in late years to throw the Psalter too late, and that we must be prepared to allow the pendulum to swing back a little. We may never re-establish the Davidic authorship of any number of the Psalms, but we are growing more reconciled to the idea that there may be a good deal more pre-exilic material in the Psalter than was commonly held by the generation now passing away. We have

a right to expect that post-exilic literature will show much more clearly the influence of monotheistic thinking than these passages do.

But, whilst to the Psalmists—or most of them—Jahveh was only one among many gods, He was yet supreme over all rivals. To Him the sacred poets of Israel with one voice ascribed the act of creation. The sea was His, He had made it; His hands had fashioned the dry land (xcv. 5). Such a doctrine was by no means unique, and probably every race which owed allegiance to a national deity would have made the same claim for its god. We have this principle well illustrated in the various forms in which the old Creation myth was current in Mesopotamia. It dates from the earliest ages of civilisation, and we have it in a Sumerian form, where the hero-god who defeats the powers of Chaos is the ancient Enlil. We have it again in a Babylonian form, and here the chief place has been taken by the great god of Babylon, Marduk, who symbolises the world-empire of his people by taking the place of the creator-god. And we have it again in an Assyrian form, and here Marduk has been deposed in favour of Asshur. There is evidence to show that Israel too held such a story among her myths, and though it has disappeared from the official records as they are found in our Bibles, there are yet references which leave us no doubt as to its existence. Probably it was in Palestine long before the first Israelite invasions, and was taken over by the conquerors with the rest of the Canaanite culture. Be that as it may, it is clear that in Israel the myth had assumed a characteristic national form, with its own features. The ancient enemy is identified with the sea—always an element of mystery and fear to the Hebrew—and has a name of its own—Rahab, identified by older commentators with Egypt, but by the newer school of students of comparative religion shown to be the analogue of Tiamat. So too the victorious Creator is neither Enlil nor Marduk nor Asshur, but Jahveh. He it was who had defeated,

hewn in pieces or imprisoned the primaeval monster, and brought an orderly world into being. Whilst the Psalmists testify to the existence of this myth, they also prove its characteristic Jahvistic form. Cp. Pss. lxxiv. 13–15, lxxxix. 9–12, civ. 6–9.

The old myth, however, is only one of many forms of the expression of this belief in Jahveh as the Creator. Few themes are more frequent in the Psalter, and the Psalmists dwell repeatedly on this subject. The heavens are the work of His fingers; He has set the moon and stars in their place (viii. 3). Again:

> The earth is the Jahveh's and its fulness,
> The world and the dwellers therein.
> For He founded it on the seas,
> And He on the floods doth sustain it. (xxiv. 1–6.)

To the Psalmists the universe illustrated the working, not merely of supreme power, but also of supreme intelligence. They looked on the world about them, and on every hand they saw evidences of a mind which they could in some measure appreciate, whose basic character was not unlike their own. Yet they saw that the creative wisdom was immeasurably greater than any human intellect, and felt themselves to be in the presence of One whose knowledge matched His strength. To them the fact that man has some power of thought was an evidence of a yet greater power of thought in God, for it would be absurd to suppose that the Creator could endow His creatures with faculties of which He Himself was destitute:

> Is He deaf, that planted the ear?
> Is He blind, that fashioned the eye? (xciv. 9.)

But the message of creation was still more obvious, and spoke of 'Him that by wisdom made the heavens' (cxxxvi. 5). And the great hymn of Nature—so often compared with the hymn of Ikhnaton—exclaims:

> How many, O Jahveh, are Thy works,
> All of them made in wisdom! (civ. 24)

This universal mind covers not only the great acts of Creation, but penetrates also all human secrets:

> O Jahveh, Thou searchest me and knowest me;
> When I sit, when I rise—Thou knowest it,
> Thou perceivest my thoughts from afar.
> When I walk, when I lie—Thou siftest it,
> Familiar with all my ways.
> There is not a word on my tongue,
> But see! Jahveh, Thou knowest it all. (cxxxix. 1–4.)

There is no escape from that all-seeing eye, and the things that man feels to be most securely hid are laid bare before that supreme intelligence.

Much of this is presented in language which recalls the old anthropomorphic view of God, though it is possible that to the Psalmists themselves these expressions were no more than metaphors. But the introduction of the attribute of Wisdom into the creative process gives already a hint of a development which was to prove of profound importance alike to later Jewish and to Christian theology. It was by His word that He made the heavens, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth (xxxiii. 6). His Wisdom created the heavens, and as time passed men began to think of the divine speech and the divine wisdom as being more than instruments. They became in fact agents, which nevertheless could not be separated from the divine essence posited by the intensely monotheistic instinct of the later Jew. It is to the Book of Wisdom and to Philo that we must look for the ripe fruit whose seed in sown in these Psalms; here it is enough to remark that the order, adaptation, arrangement and all the significant traces of intelligent design were never used by the Jew, early or late, as arguments for the existence of God Himself; He was assumed, and what men saw led them to an understanding of His nature and powers.

In this connection it is important to notice that the Psalmists never thought of God as merely the originator of the universe.

It is true that He had made it; it is equally true that He remained in the closest touch with it. The oriental mind is slow to grasp the conception of Law, especially in the work of nature. To the ancient Jew every event in nature was expressly willed and purposed, each was a deliberate act of God. To him there were no miracles, because everything was a miracle. That is to say, every phenomenon was a separate deed, and was expressly controlled by the Creator. Every morning He exercised afresh His power in the sunrise. Every blade of grass, every drop of rain was consciously determined by the same creative power. There is an entire absence of that scientific instinct which looks for the machinery of nature; to the Psalmist the only motive force lay in the particular act of will that was responsible for each happening. The storm rises at His command ; He sends the rain. It is just as easy for Him to invert or alter the process as it is to maintain it in regularity. We may indeed go further. That kind of supreme authority which was attributed by the Israelite poet to Jahveh could only prove itself by abnormal action. It is possible that some such feeling as this lies behind all the belief in and the longing for miracles. It may be that Jahveh has made regular laws for the guidance of the universe. If that be so, however, He will sooner or later prove His authority by suspending or abrogating Law. It is only so that He can demonstrate clearly to such minds His mastery over the world. He can only shew that He made the laws, and therefore is their superior, by breaking them; He can only bring home to men His control of the normal by making it give place to the abnormal. This feeling is, perhaps, not confined to the Psalmists—or even to ancient Israel.

Mention should here be made of the divine relation to man as conceived by the Psalmists. Here, too, the essential doctrine is one of absolute and unconditioned dominance. Jahveh is the supreme lord, not only of the material universe, but

also of the human world. He can do as He will, not only with the armies of heaven, but also with the inhabitants of the earth. Men owe to Him the breath, the *rûªch* which makes existence possible for them, and to Him in time it will return. As long as it dwells in them, He can move and remove, bring success or disaster, distribute happiness or woe. He is the lord of battle, and by His appearance in time of need can instil panic into the hearts of His enemies and those of His people. The fact that He is hailed as King is in itself complete enough proof of this position, for the eastern mind thinks of kingship as the position which endows its holder with supreme power. All society is graded; each has his own fixed place in the order of man. Every one owes obedience, unquestioning and unconditional, to his superiors, and there are equally those below him to whom he has the right to give orders. At the summit of this social pyramid stands the King, he who can give orders to all and receives them from none. His word is a categorical imperative, for principle to the oriental mind stands far below personal authority in stringency. As King, not only over one nation, but over all peoples, Jahveh, to the mind of the Psalmist, has unlimited power, an authority which none may challenge, and which man neglects or avoids at his own supreme risk.

Jahveh is thus the dispenser of gifts to His people, and to all who call upon Him in truth. As an omnipotent God, He has an unlimited supply of benefits to bestow, and He apportions these in accordance with His own personal desires. This might be said of the deities of most religions, ancient and modern, but with the Psalmists we find occasionally a variation from the usual means of securing favour. It is true that often man seeks the face of God in a spirit of humility which is almost abject, and that he combines with it a praise which suggests at times flattery. It is true that sometimes men would appease Him with gifts: 'Bring ye an offering, enter His courts' (xcvi. 8),

and would shew in practical form their gratitude for favours bestowed: 'I will offer to thee a thank-offering, and call on the name of the Lord' (cxvi. 17). But at the same time the main burden of their song is the ethical demand of Jahveh:

Who may ascend the hill of Jahveh,
Or who may stand in His holy place?
The clean of hands, the pure of heart,
Who sets not his soul on sinful things,
Nor swears with intent to deceive. (xxiv. 3 f.)
I vowed to watch my words,
And sin not with my tongue, (xxxix. 1.)

Sometimes this attitude to man and God did not meet with the reward expected from it, and this contradiction between theory and fact constituted the greatest of all the problems which the Psalmists had to face:

Why must I walk so sadly,
So hard pressed by the foe? (xlii. 9.)
Why, O God, hast Thou spurned us for ever?
Why smoketh Thy wrath against the sheep of Thy pasture?
(lxxiv. 1.)
Why, O Jahveh, dost Thou spurn me,
And hide Thy face from me? (lxxxviii. 14.)
But thou hast cast off in contempt,
And been furious with Thine anointed.
Thou hast spurned the covenant with Thy servant,
And his sacred crown dashed to the ground.
How long, O Jahveh, wilt Thou hide Thee for ever?
How long are the fires of Thy wrath to burn?
(lxxxix. 38, 39, 46.)

Here is the difficulty. Israel as a people and the individual Israelite have been faithful. They have not disobeyed or broken the moral law, and yet the punishment of wickedness has fallen on them, and not on those who have set themselves against God. As a rule the Psalmists accept the position, and make this inequality in the distribution of rewards and punish-

ments a ground of appeal to the righteous God. But at times there were men who were prepared to face the matter through all doubt and difficulty, and find God in spite of the questions that arose as to His essential justice. Such was the writer of the seventy-third Psalm, one of the noblest pieces in the whole collection.

In one or two of the Psalms this insistence on moral holiness is directly contrasted with sacrifice and offering, which are declared to be of no value:

> In offerings bloody or bloodless
> Thou hast no delight.
> Burnt-offering and offering for sin
> Are not what Thou askest. (xl. 6.)
> For in sacrifice hast Thou no pleasure,
> In gifts of burnt-offering no delight.
> The sacrifice pleasing to God
> Is a spirit that is broken;
> A heart that is crushed, O God,
> Thou wilt not despise— (li. 16 f.)

while the writer of Ps. l. carries to its logical conclusion the doctrines of God's spirituality and universal supremacy:

> Not for thy sacrifices will I reprove thee—
> Thy burnt-offerings are ever before Me—
> Not a bull will I take from thy house,
> Nor a he-goat out of thy folds;
> For all beasts of the forest are Mine,
> And the kine on a thousand hills.
> I know all the birds of the air,
> All that moves on the fields is Mine.
> Were I hungry, I would not tell thee,
> For the world and its fulness are Mine,
> Am I such as to eat bulls' flesh,
> Or to drink the blood of goats? (vv. 8–13.)

This is perhaps the consummation of the moral doctrine of the Psalmists—what God wants is not sacrifice but righteousness

and fellowship; this is the teaching not of the Psalmists alone, but of the noblest of the prophets of Israel.

It may well be asked whether the conception of a God so powerful as to be indeed omnipotent leaves any room for true morality. Will it not lead in the end to a pure determinism? If all things are controlled by God, must He not in the last resort be responsible for all that happens? The numerous prayers for deliverance from foes show that this sense of divine omnipotence is strong in the Psalms, but at the same time it does not seem to override the demand for human righteousness. The Psalmists offer no solution to the old problem of free-will and omnipotence. They do not tell us how the absolute power of God leaves room for man to choose his own way. They do not attempt to face the conflict between divine absolutism and human self-determination. In the same way Islam has, even more than Judaism, laid stress on the absolute despotism of God, and yet speaks to its devotees as though they were free to do the expressed divine will, or to refuse it if they were prepared to face the consequences. Either religion would have held it to be blasphemy to dispute the unconditioned authority of God, and yet both assume that man can take his own way if he insists on doing so, and appeal to Him to make choice of goodness as if he were free and unfettered. Neither would have considered such a modification of the idea of omnipotence as commends itself to most modern minds when confronted with this problem, for, strange as it seems to us, neither seems ever to have been in the least conscious of any discrepancy, still less of any contradiction, between the two points of view. This is perhaps one of the features of the non-philosophical eastern mind, which is, as it were, divided into water-tight compartments, and while one thought is before the Psalmists, the other can find no entry. Hence there is no attempt to co-ordinate and arrange ideas into an orderly system—perhaps such co-ordination would have been impossible for the ancient Israelite.

We have, then, a picture of a God of unlimited power, a veritable despot. Yet, as the demand for righteousness already suggests, His government is kindly. For one of His outstanding characteristics is Love. In passages too numerous to quote—we have one whole Psalm, ciii., which may be called a hymn of the love of Jahveh, and numerous other references—this quality is mentioned and extolled. But it is even more important to notice that it lies at the back of nearly all the prayer and petition of the Psalmists. They approach their God with confession, complaint, entreaty, or protest of innocence, but always in the confidence that they can rely on His favour. It never occurs to them that He can be hostile, unless they are in danger of being driven to this conclusion by disasters which they have suffered. And even then they are ready to find some fault in themselves which has for the time cut them off from Jahveh, and which may be revealed to them, and removed by due atonement. Sometimes the tone in which they write is one of expostulation. They recall the glories of the past, and recount the miracles of power and love which have marked their national history. They appeal for a repetition of these acts of power and kindliness, often with language which shews a bitter vindictiveness towards those who have oppressed and wronged them, but which looks with some confidence for a reversal of fortune by Jahveh.

Whilst the actual word for Love is sometimes used in the Psalms, the more usual term for Jahveh's attitude towards men is *chésedh*, usually rendered in our versions 'mercy,' but also by 'kindness' or 'loving-kindness.' It is one of the great words of the Hebrew language, and no one word in English will carry its full meaning. It may be an attitude of equals towards one another, it may be felt by the inferior for the superior, it may be shewn by the superior to the inferior. Nor is it merely a mode of action or an emotion. It is an essential quality of soul, a spiritual endowment which goes deep down into the

very nature of him who has it. It implies a full recognition of the value of personality, and adds to that recognition a consecration of one to another. No other word means so much to the Hebrew ear, and its cultivation in the human heart is the highest demand of the prophetic morality. In all completeness it can only be seen in Jahveh, and, in addition to the many Psalms which make reference to it, Psalm cxxxvi. has the familiar refrain in which it is ascribed to Him as an eternal and unchangeable element in His being. He is righteous, faithful and true, but the quality which is peculiarly His is Love.

Next to the power and love of Jahveh, the characteristic which most impressed the Psalmists was His eternity. It may well be that the nature of eternity was never thought out by them, for that is a matter of philosophical speculation, and the ancient Jew was not given to metaphysics. It is held by some modern western minds that eternity is not so much the infinite extension of time as the negation of time, not so much an endless succession of experiences as a state in which all experience may be contemporaneous, in which time, so far from being endless, has ceased to exist altogether. Whether this view be philosophically sound or not, it was certainly impossible to the ancient Hebrew mind. It involves an investigation of the processes of thought, and of the nature of experience, which was entirely foreign to their mental constitution. Their instinct was always to feel rather than to reason; they tended to accept experience at its face value, and were slow to probe beneath, unless compelled by some obvious and flagrant contradiction between theory and fact to ask for reasons. The eternity of Jahveh did not consist in His ability to transcend the category of time.

It is not even certain that they held a doctrine of an endless duration of time. To some of us Infinity is a necessary condition of thought. To us every limit implies a beyond, every end a new beginning. But it is quite conceivable that the

ancient Israelite never reached this point, that he did not dwell sufficiently on the nature of his own thought to see its implications. He used language, it is true, which might imply duration of indefinite length, but it is by no means certain that he always thought of that duration as being endless. Controversy has raged in the past over the meaning of the word *'ôlam*. Does it mean endless time or simply time which, though very long, may yet be limited? And what is the precise significance of such a phrase as that which closes Ps. xxiii.—*l^e'órek yamîm*? The traditional rendering is 'for ever,' but does it really imply that?

In answering such a question as this we may perhaps take refuge in a fact which we have had to notice more than once: our Psalms are not homogeneous. There is room in them not merely for many different forms of expression, but for slow and gradual change in the exact meaning of the terms employed. While in some of the Psalms it may be well that Jahveh's life is simply thought of as being very much longer than that of man, there are others in which it certainly seems that a true infinity is in contemplation. Such a phrase as 'He remaineth eternally loyal' (cxlvi. 6) need not imply infinity, because loyalty is always related to a second party, and there is little evidence in the Psalms of a belief in any man's eternal relation to Jahveh. The opening words of Ps. cxlv.:

> I will exalt Thee, my God, O King,
> I will bless Thy name for ever and ever.
> I will bless Thee every day:
> I will praise Thy name for ever and ever—

certainly do not imply eternity in the ordinary sense of the word, and similar expressions are found in the song of the king's marriage, Ps. xlv., where even poetic hyperbole will hardly account for a doctrine of royal eternity. In Ps. xciii. 2, *me'ôlam*, 'from all eternity,' can hardly have its modern meaning, since the whole Psalm is the celebration of an event taking place at a

definite point in time, Jahveh's ascent of His throne. Such words, again, as these:

> Thine is a kingdom that lives through all ages:
> Through all generations extends Thy dominion—
> (cxlv. 13.)

must not be pressed to mean more than that Jahveh has outlived all historic generations and will survive the present and many succeeding ages. This is not necessarily a doctrine of infinite duration. On the other hand there are several passages which do seem to imply that the idea of a genuine eternity was held by the writer. It is with such an idea that Ps. cii. reaches its climax and conclusion:

> Thou art the same, Thy years are endless. (v. 27.)

So too the opening of Ps. xc.:

> Jahveh, Thou hast been a home to us
> One generation after another.
> Before the mountains were born,
> Or the earth and the world were brought forth,
> From everlasting to everlasting
> Art Thou, O God. (vv. 1 f.)

Here it does seem as if we had the conception of a God who is at least older than creation, and may thus be carried back to an infinite extension in the past, and, if that be so, to the future also.

This last illustration serves to bring home to us the real feeling which underlies all these expressions. Whether there is any philosophical idea of infinite duration or not, we can at least say that Jahveh's life is immeasurably longer than that of man. In fact the stress is laid on the evanescence of all things human rather than on the permanence of things divine. More than once the contrast is directly expressed:

> My days decline as a shadow,
> As for me I wither like grass.
> But Thou, O Jahveh, art enthroned for ever,
> Thy fame endureth to all generations. (cii. 11, 12.)

This is alternately a ground for awe and for rejoicing, as the Psalmist may feel himself in some way opposed to or supported by his God. One of the noblest of the songs of Israel, Ps. xc., is a passionate cry for something durable. It is a lament over human fate comparable with that of Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*, or with the pessimistic utterances of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*:

> One moment in Annihilation's Waste,
> One moment of the Well of Life to taste—
> The Stars are setting, and the Caravan
> Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste!

The Psalmist is overwhelmed with the shortness of human life and with the futility of human existence. The days of man are but as grass. Even if they be lengthened out to their uttermost limits they are but a moment in comparison with the eternity of God. A watch in the night, and nothing more—that is all that even the longest and the fullest life can be. Such thoughts had occurred to others, but usually with a sense of comfort at the thought that the days of the wicked were numbered:

> Like a dream, when one wakes, shall they be,
> Whose phantom the waker despises. (lxxiii. 20.)

The writer of Ps. xlix., it is true, accepts the fact that righteous and wicked are alike in this matter; their fate is one.

> For assuredly no man can ransom himself,
> Or give unto God the price of his life,
> To keep him alive for ever and ever,
> So as never to see the pit at all. (vv. 7–9.)

But this helps him to endure the insolent prosperity of the wicked; their doom is sure as his own; in that, at any rate, they have no advantage over him. In Ps. xc., on the other hand, there is no distinction of moral character. It is not a problem that troubles the poet, but a fact, and a fact alone does not

constitute a problem, though it may cause the deepest suffering. He feels the oppression of his fate and longs intensely for some solid basis for life So he cries out to the eternal and changeless God for something immutable and permanent which shall survive him, and shall endure when he himself has long passed from the earth.

The Psalmists thus present us with a God who is not perhaps unique, but is nevertheless supreme. He is for all practical purposes Omnipotent, Omniscient, moral, loving, and eternal. But this universality and supreme kingship do not in the least conflict with the rather primitive theory of the intimate association of Jahveh with His people. The great work of Moses had been to bring God and people together, so that, united by covenant bonds which He, at least, would never snap, He might become their God and they might become His people. This view is assumed practically throughout the Psalms. It forms the basis of many an appeal for victory over enemies, and of many a request for favour. Even Ps. lxxiii. begins with an exclamation of delight at the goodness of God to Israel, and all except the most individual Psalms assume the same intimate relation. There are Psalms which are devoted to an exposition of the dealings of Jahveh with the fathers of Israel; some might even be regarded as a versified rendering of the prose narratives of the Hexateuch. Such are Pss. cv., cvi., and though the process is clearer here than elsewhere, it underlies much that we find in other parts of the Psalter. It is taken as a matter of course that when Israel is oppressed, He will interpose, destroy the enemy, and save her. If bitter suffering has been endured, then Israel looks to Jahveh, not merely for restoration but also for vengeance. We may—indeed we must—feel that some of the imprecatory Psalms are unchristian, and might with advantage be excluded from our public worship, but if we had stood where the Psalmists stood, seen what they saw, endured what they endured, loved as they loved, we too might share also

in their cry for vengeance. We may not approve of the conclusion of Ps. cxxxvii., but there are few of us who have the right to refuse the author our sympathy. Had we behind us such a history as Israel has recorded of herself, we too might well claim that the universal King of gods and men was in a special sense our God, that we were His flock and the sheep of His pasture.

This nationalistic outlook is well illustrated by the location of the home of Jahveh. The older view, represented in the Song of Deborah and in the story of Elijah, was that He dwelt in Sinai or Horeb, and that to get into the closest touch with Him, it was necessary to make the journey to the far south. It is true that His presence was to some extent assured by the Ark, and possibly by other symbols, and it is clear that this belief grew into the conviction that His true home was, after all, in Zion. Ps. lxviii. alone alludes to Sinai; Horeb is mentioned only in the historical retrospect of Ps. cvi. 19; Edom never appears as a land lying on Jahveh's path as it does in Jud. v. On the other hand Zion—a name preferred in this connection to Jerusalem—is repeatedly mentioned by Psalmists as the place where Jahveh dwells. It is His home (ix. 11), there is His habitation (lxxvi. 2), it is the mountain which He has made His home (lxxiv. 2). From Zion He blesses His people (cxxviii. 5), and thence He comes to win victories for them in the open field (xx. 2; liii. 6). The saintly poet to whom we owe that lament over the captivity which now forms Pss. xlii. and xliii. is suffering from every kind of indignity and distress, but that which cuts him most keenly to the heart is not the loss of his home and property, nor even the taunts of his enemies nor his own enslavement; it is the thought that he is now cut off from worship. Jahveh dwells in Jerusalem, and the Psalmist is well on the perilous journey which will lead him into a land where he can no more see the face of his God.

This particularism is the more remarkable when we remember that many, if not all the Psalms present us with another view. The earthly Temple, which has its site on Mt. Zion, is but the fainter image of the heavenly Temple in which Jahveh really dwells. There may be hints of an older idea that Jahveh, like other gods, had His home on some sacred mountain in the far north, but for the most part the Psalmists think of Him as supra-terrestrial Above the sapphire dome of the firmament which shut off the orderly universe from the chaos of waters there stood the great palace of God. Here He sat in splendour inconceivable, clad in radiant light and throned in glory. Hence His eye could inspect all that passed beneath, even to the ends of the earth, the farthest limit of the terrestrial plain. About Him thronged His attendants, whether subordinate gods or angelic beings is a minor detail—in either case all recognised His supremacy. Milton has but dimly shadowed His royal state, for the language of the Psalmists is not only richer and more impressive in itself, but is suggestive of wonders which surpass even their powers of speech. Those who are about Jahveh are ever at His beck and call, and they, like their Master, are as flames of fire, outshining the sun in brightness and outstripping the wind in speed. From time to time He summons them to council, and with due reverence they speak before Him; to Him they are answerable for their conduct. From the assembled multitude there arises a hymn of praise, telling the story of His marvellous acts, and reiterating the tale of His glory, while with their voices there mingles also, faint but audible, the 'little human praise' of the earthly worshippers below.

There are moments when it is permitted to men to catch a glimpse of this glory. Jahveh leaves His throne, and is borne on the back of His strange winged steed through the lower air. Portents mark His coming, and marvels are about Him. He speaks, and the universe totters; His lightest whisper is a clap of thunder. His words carve out flaming tongues of fire, and

at the sound the whole world quakes. Mountains reel, forests are stripped of their leaves; the pasture lands of the lower hills toss and stagger, the sea flees in panic, and in the midst of the heaving tumult He rides on in majesty, controlling and directing the storm. For though all seems to be confusion, there is behind it a purpose and an aim. The foes of Jahveh and of His people are abroad, and He comes to work their destruction. Against His advance no mortal army can stand; no human power can resist His might. There is no need for Israel to fight, Jahveh of Hosts is with them, and following Him the whole array of the celestial powers falls upon His adversaries. Struck with terror they turn to flee, but their limbs fail them; they stumble and fall to rise no more. Israel's deliverer has come, and as He returns to His celestial throne, His people sing their hymn of thanksgiving and of peace, and through the heavenly Temple the song of glory is resumed. Jahveh is King.

Theodore H. Robinson.

III

THE INNER LIFE OF THE PSALMISTS

The religious lyric is the one great artistic achievement of ancient Israel, and the Book of Psalms is the chief literary monument of that achievement. Yet 'monument' is an ill-suited term to describe a book so intensely alive as this, a book of which the vocabulary and thought have so entered into the world's religious life. A truer comparison would be with that mystic garment of the soul, described in the Syriac hymn, the heavenly garment that mirrors the self, over which the motions of knowledge are stirring, adorned with precious stones, and having depicted upon it the image of the King of kings. In 'the beauty of holiness' of the Book of Psalms man still worships God and still finds himself.

The secret of its creation is the secret of all artistic achievement—the emergence of a new creation, in which the material is taken up into the spiritual. The artist always brings to his particular medium—stone, pigments, sound, speech—his own range of experience and vision; the result will depend partly on the character of the medium, partly on the intensity of the experience. This two-fold modification is not less true of religion, which might, indeed, be described as a form of art. The particular *quality* of a religion will depend on the character of its sacramental mediation—in the largest sense of the word 'sacramental'; the *quantity* of religious life will depend chiefly

on the other factor, the intensity of the experience of life, the degree to which a nation or a man has *lived*. Both as art, therefore, and as religion, the religious lyric of Israel was doubly conditioned by a particular national history and its products, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the intensity of Israel's national and individual experience of life, during the period at which the Book of Psalms chiefly came into being. That was the period of post-exilic Judaism, in which the loyal servants of Jahveh again and again faced physical or spiritual martyrdom for their faith. In both respects, the approach to God through the past, and the experience of God in the present, the religious lyrics of the Psalter are a distillation of life. The chief medium of revelation is history, the past history of Israel as a redeemed and delivered people; the dominant idea of God is that of the Holy One of Israel, covenanted to her in loving-kindness, righteous to keep His covenant, holy beyond man's humble range of being. A chief motive to compose these religious lyrics is the sore need of present help in time of trouble, experienced by these disciples of the prophets, through the scorn and tyranny and actual violence of irreligious Israelites and pagan neighbours or rulers. The keynote of the Psalter seems to be struck in the words of l. 15:

> Call upon Me in the day of trouble.
> I will rescue thee and thou shalt glorify Me,

which, as Gunkel says, briefly summarises the whole life of the pious.

It is almost always impossible to recover the historical background of particular psalms, so that we must be content to say that our present Psalter is the 'Praise-book' of post-exilic Judaism. There are assuredly many pre-exilic elements in it; but these have been so freely edited and adapted to the religious uses of a later generation that we cannot confidently use the Psalms as evidence for anything but the post-exilic religion.

We must treat it, in fact, as we have learnt to treat the stories of the Jahvist and Elohist in the Pentateuch. We recognise in them the presence of genuine early traditions and primitive beliefs; yet these have been so moulded by the religious ideas of the ninth and eighth centuries that we take our documents primarily as evidence for the ideas of these centuries. So the Book of Psalms, certainly shaped, and largely created between the Exile and the Maccabean age, reveals the religious life of the unknown men who so shaped or created it.

With these unknown authors we may group the Levitical choirs who sang these psalms in their present form, and the throngs of more or less devout worshippers who listened and responded with their 'Amens' and 'Hallelujahs' in the Temple courts. There is no confusion in thinking at one and the same time of all these three classes, authors, choirs and worshippers. Many of the Psalms, from their very nature, are songs of the community, written to express common prayers and praises. They are not, like the oracles of the prophets (on which they ultimately build), original and creative in their ideas; the originality, such as it is, consists in the wider appropriation of those oracles. Indeed, the much discussed question as to whether the personality represented as speaking, the 'I' of the Psalms, is an individual or the community, seems often to be as mistaken in purpose as it is fruitless of result. The Psalms always give us the point of view of an individual poet; but in that point of view he often becomes so conscious of his identity with either Israel, or the worthier elements of it, that without warning he will generalise from his own experience, and speak also in the name of the larger or smaller group, without any sense of inconsistency. Our concern, then, is with the inner life of the typical individual who speaks to us through the Psalms, whether that individual in any given instance be a single or a corporate personality. But we must not expect to find nearly as much introspection as in a modern hymn-book.

If the Psalter had been introspective, it would probably by this time be disused, for introspection is always the slave of the moment, the prey of the transient mood. The Psalms are as concrete and 'objective' in the handling of ideas as in vocabulary. They are far simpler, even cruder in what they say than we are apt to think, for it is exceedingly difficult for us to strip off the layers of later association. The imprecatory psalms are not the only features to startle a modern reader, if he comes to understand the Psalter in its original and historical meaning. He will find that forgiveness often means primarily the recovery of health or prosperity, that righteousness seems to come perilously near the respectability of the Pharisee, that the Providence of God is often piously asserted in the teeth of evidence, that the ideas of history and nature and man are quite inadequate to our knowledge. Yet, having discovered all this and more, his study may inspire a deeper gratitude for the strong, simple faith of the Psalmists, the courage of their convictions, the persistency of their purpose, the true catholicity of their fundamental assumptions.

I. In the Psalms, man looks up to God through four concentric circles of human experience. The nearest to his heart is the Temple and its worship. The Temple is the magnetic centre of a passionate devotion, not yet rivalled by the Jewish passion for the Law, though a few Psalms reveal this later characteristic. The type of religion served by the Temple was both sacramental and social. It was sacramental—the elaborate ritual of the daily offering, so punctiliously performed, the solemn pouring out of the libation, the silver trumpets of the priests, the melody of the Levitical choirs, are all set before us in the eloquent description of Ben Sirach as being rendered in the very presence of God. Not less does Ben Sirach bring out the social character of the worship, the prostration of all the people before the Most High God, their common prayer, and their common reception of the high priestly blessing.

There are differences of attitude towards the ritual among the Psalmists, as there had been differences of attitude amongst the prophets, their teachers, towards the Temple itself. But even those who know that all the cattle on the mountains are God's, and that the sacrifice He most desires is that of the spiritual thanksgiving, know also that it is out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, that God has shone forth.

So the gates of the Temple are bidden to lift up their heads, that Jahveh, the King of glory, may come in (xxiv. 7); the procession round the altar brings a peculiar sense of nearness to Him (xxvi. 6); to dwell in this house of His is to gaze on His pleasantness (xxvii. 4); sorrow's crown of sorrow is for an exiled psalmist to remember the happiness in which he went with the throng, leading them in procession to the house of God to appear before Him (xlii. 2–4) in His holy hill and dwelling-place (xliii. 3). To appear before God in Zion is the joyous and sustaining thought of the long pilgrimage (lxxxiv. 7), and it is from Zion that the blessing goes forth upon Jahveh's servants (cxxxiv. 3). Those who say these things undoubtedly believe that Jahveh is the God of the whole earth, yet with this faith they combine a strongly localised sense of His presence, so that for them, as well as for Ezekiel, the true name of Zion is 'Jahveh Shammah'—'Jahveh is there' (Ezek. xlviii. 35).

Round about this Temple was drawn the circle of Jewish society, that of a small community sharply divided from its numerous neighbours, sharply divided in itself, proudly conscious of a high destiny, yet helpless to give adequate political expression to it. The smaller a community is, the more intensely are its social divisions realised. Up on the hill of Zion, the ideal unity of Israel might be confessed and its political helplessness forgotten. But when the worshippers streamed down to their houses in Jerusalem, and passed each other in its streets, or when they scattered from its festivals to their village homes, or to the distant lands from which they had come, the ideal was hidden

by the real. The larger community of worshippers shrank to smaller proportions; they that feared Jahveh must speak often one to another to maintain their loyalty and pay its price. The passionate outcries of the Psalmists against their enemies are by no means wholly selfish. In their utterance of them, they are zealous for *Israel*. The new individualism of Jeremiah and Ezekiel did not mean that Israelites could be saved without Israel. A corporate body was as necessary to a national resurrection as an individual body to the subsequent hope of life beyond death. The post-exilic Israelite still came to God through Israel, and his religion was as fundamentally social as his ethics.

A circle still wider than that of contemporary society was the arena of history, across which Israel had moved for so many generations, watched by the eye and led by the hand of Jahveh. History meant the story of Jahveh's redemptive purpose and His manifest deeds of deliverance of Israel.

> He made known His ways unto Moses,
> His deeds unto the children of Israel. (Ps. ciii. 7.)

The circle was narrow, as we count history to-day, and most of all narrow because Israel was without any vision of a destiny for man in the realms beyond death. But the narrowness of the circle, and its limitation to this earth, and chiefly to this people, were the necessary conditions for that strong sense of the reality of history which underlay the prophetic consciousness, and is echoed in the Psalmists' confession of faith. Jahveh is real, because He has done such real things, and will do them again. Religion must often concentrate to know its own reality.

The outermost circle of life, for Israel as for all men, is nature, though a nature never conceived as a rival or barrier to God. Nature is God's creation and constant activity, the direct and immediate expression of His power and will. That activity

is transcendent, not immanent, Hebrew and not Greek. Jahveh is conceived in terms of the first chapter of Genesis, of the God who speaks and it is done (xxxiii. 9), not of the more primitive second chapter, where Jahveh shapes man like a potter with His own hands, and walks the earth like a man in the cool of the evening. Yet even in the Psalms we must not over-spiritualise the idea of God. He was probably still conceived in human form as in the Book of Daniel, and as actually living in a heavenly palace, above a solid firmament. He is still for religious thought one object, though the supreme object, among others. He 'looks down' (xiv. 2, cii. 19) upon the earth He has fixed securely on the waters (xxiv. 2), even though He no longer comes down to walk upon it. The cosmology is still of the primitive type, though wholly subordinated to the ends of ethical theism. The late one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, which wrestles with the mystery of God's omniscient omnipresence, and thinks of His grasp as extending even to the caverns of Sheol, is unique; earlier Psalms do not seem conscious of the mystery of God in this sense, and probably had a much less spiritual view of it. Jahveh is concerned with the earth, not with Sheol, and with man, not with 'shades.' Upon this unmoving earth, with a sun-travelled or star-lanterned roof overhead, man goes forth to his work and labour until the evening of his brief day. Man, like the world in which he lives, is wonderfully made. His real personality is the body, through which are distributed both psychical consciousness and ethical qualities (xxxv. 10, lxiii. 1, lxxxiv. 2). God who shaped the embryo certainly knows the thoughts and feelings of its organs (cxxxix. 1 f. and 13 f.); He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that shaped the eye, shall He not discern? (xciv. 9). Man's breath-soul is indeed no more than an animating principle, and when he dies, it will not be his soul or spirit that goes into Sheol, but a ghostly shadow of himself as a whole. Man's only life is on this earth; the

shades below are as inferior to him in vitality as the heavenly beings above the firmament are superior. With all the more passion, therefore, does the religious man appeal to God for the longest possible extension and for the unbroken welfare of this brief and only day of his life.

From within these four encompassing spheres, the Temple, Society, History and Nature, the Psalmist looked out on God, whilst finding God active in each of them. That activity is the real ground of his religious faith. It is the brutish man, the fool, who fails to discern the greatness and depth of the works of Jahveh (xcii. 5, 6), and dares to think, 'There is no God' (xiv. 1), which means there is no divine activity (x. 4). The object of faith is spiritual though anthropomorphic; the personality of Jahveh is clearly and strongly conceived. Yet we must not construe that spirituality in the manner of Wordsworth's

> Something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

Jahveh is conceived as always external to the natural world which He controls, just as the one hundred and fourth Psalm so picturesquely describes; He makes the clouds His chariot, He sets a bound for the waters, He made the moon for solemn seasons, He gives or withdraws the essential breath of all animate creatures—but He is not the immanent spirit of all this world, even though, as in the one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm, He penetrates into its remotest corners by that 'spirit' which is a synonym of His 'face' or personality (cxxxix. 7). By this presence of His, which His activity reveals, Jahveh is there in the Temple (iii. 4, etc.); He is so identified with

Israel that He will not abandon His people nor forsake His inheritance (xciv. 14); He has done great things for them in their history, filling their mouths with laughter and their tongues with praise (cxxvi. 2); He sits enthroned on the firmament, controlling all the storms that sweep the earth (xxix.). Such is the four-fold ground of confidence, such the objective quality of the faith in Jahveh. That faith is no cloistered sentiment, seeking divorce from the hard facts of life; it is not a purely or primarily *individual* relation to Jahveh, short-circuited from its relation to other men; if it can be described as a value-judgment on historic fact, the conscious emphasis falls on the fact, and not on the judgment; nor was it aware of any 'laws of nature' interposing between man and the direct activity of God

II. 1. By what right, beyond his membership in the community of Israel, was a man entitled to hold this faith? The characteristic way of describing the conditions is to picture the worshipper as a guest in Jahveh's house, with all its privileges of sanctuary. In the twenty-fourth Psalm the answer is given in the spirit of the great prophets:

> Who shall ascend the mountain of Jahveh,
> And who shall stand in His holy place?
> The clean of hands and the pure of heart,
> Who sets not his desire on worthlessness,
> And does not swear deceitfully.

So in the fuller statement of the fifteenth Psalm, the qualities of a blameless life and an honest purpose are abstinence from slander and ill-deeds, from the exaction of interest on loans and the taking of bribes, whilst Jahveh's guest is always loyal to a costly oath and to his true fellow-worshippers. This is the man who will be protected by the hospitality which Jahveh offers. Not less than this could have been demanded by ethical theism.

2. Like every insistence on character in relation to faith,

this emphasis had its own perils, those which the popular connotation of the word 'Pharisaism' illustrates. The inner life of religion is so subtle and so delicate that when moral conditions are emphasised, prominence may be given to man rather than to God, and moral respectability may replace the life-breath of faith. There are passages in the Psalms which shew how real this peril was. The twenty-sixth Psalm sounds like a comment on the words of the Pharisee condemned by Jesus, 'God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men':

> I have not sat with worthless men,
> Nor kept company with dissemblers;
> I hate the congregation of evil-doers,
> And will not sit with the wicked;
> I wash my hands in innocency,
> And would go around Thine altar, Jahveh.

The Christian reader instinctively feels that there is something wrong with such words as these. They may be perfectly true in fact, and yet there is a wrong emphasis in the inner life of the man who utters them. On the other hand, historical exegesis must recognise that the Jew did stand high above his neighbours in moral character and conduct, and that his natural pride before men was accompanied in the Psalms by a genuine and deep humility before God. Israel's faith could compare itself with the weaned child in its mother's arms (cxxxi. 2), and the faith of which that comparison is true is in the genealogy of Gethsemane. The danger of Pharisaism, in fact, is not confined to Judaism, though the moral advance of Judaism first incurred it; it belongs everywhere to the difficult task of reconciling morality and religion. We might almost say, from the standpoint of the Gospel, 'How hardly shall they that have moral riches enter into the kingdom of God!'

3. The Book of Psalms, as a whole, can certainly not be accused of Pharisaism. Its emphasis falls on God, not on men, and its dominant note is one of strong confidence in Him,

a confidence usually buoyant and joyful, but all the more impressive in the numerous petitionary psalms that cry for a deliverance from distress. The one hundred and seventh Psalm, for example, with its unique miniature paintings of human need—the traveller's, the prisoner's, the sick man's, the sailor's—breathes the atmosphere of glad thanksgiving and happy trust:

> Let them praise Jahveh for His kindness,
> For His wonderful works unto men.

The ninety-first Psalm is full of the happiest trust in the God of special providences, who protects by day and by night from plague and pestilence, lion and adder. The sixteenth Psalm is very sure of God as the source of all good, the true guide of life, the giver of its abundant happiness. We must not let this dominant declaration of trustful happiness be obscured either by the particular challenges to it, contained, as will be seen, in the Psalter, or by the particular developments of post-exilic ritual such as the sin- and guilt-offering, and the Day of Atonement. Some words from the late Buchanan Gray's recent book on *Sacrifice* may be fitly quoted here:

> 'In the Jewish religion, in the time of our Lord, the Day of Atonement, with its stress on sin and expiation, with its fasting and solemn rest and inactivity, was the supreme day of the year: yet it was but one day; within the year some twenty days of full festival joy also occurred, and some forty other days were observed as happy memorials of the works which God had wrought, especially in relatively recent times, on behalf of His people' (p. 322).

These words refer to the *issues* of post-exilic Judaism, yet in spirit they are true of the religion of the Psalmists throughout that period. There were undoubtedly great crises and agonies, sore perils and persecutions, such as the banishment of many Jews under Artaxerxes Ochus, of which we know hardly more than the fact itself. There was also the constant tension

between religion and irreligion, such as the prophets faced. But, for the most part, life must have gone on happily and prosperously, and the fortunes of Job, with the problem of Job, were never experienced by the majority of Jews. If we had climbed Mount Zion with some throng of newly arrived pilgrims, and had listened to the worship of the Temple courts, its noisily joyful expression would have been a true index to the general character of the inner life of the Psalmists. A Psalmist can say:

> A *moment* passes in His anger,
> A *life* in His favour:
> Weeping may come in to lodge at eventide,
> But a glad cry in the morning. (xxx. 5.)

This must not be forgotten whilst we turn to consider the three shadows that fell across this sunlight—the fact of death, the burden of sin, and the incidence of suffering.

III. 1. The fact of death inexorably awaits every man:

> Who is the man that shall live and not see death,
> And shall rescue himself from the hand of Sheol ?
> (lxxxix. 48.)

Death awaits man like a hunter with cords and snares (xviii. 4, 5), or like a shepherd folding his flock in Sheol (xlix. 14). When men, as through sickness, draw near to the gates of death (cvii. 18), their *only* hope is that Jahveh should grant them a new lease of life (lvi. 13, lxviii. 20, lxxviii. 50). Then are they chastened, but not ' given over to death ' (cxviii. 18), for it is a serious thing to Jahveh that those covenanted in love to Him should die (cxvi. 15) :

> In death there is no remembrance of Thee,
> In Sheol who will give Thee thanks ?
> (vi. 5; cf. xxx. 9, cxv. 17.)

As they do not remember Him, so He does not remember them; they are severed from His hand. (lxxxviii. 5, 10–12.)

The eighty-eighth Psalm just quoted has been called 'the one hopeless psalm' (Peters), and it is significant that it should be devoted to the inexorable fact of death. This attitude to death does not mean, of course, that death brings complete cessation of existence; man still continues to exist in the ghostly form of the strengthless shades in Sheol (lxxxviii. 4). But it is an existence as worthless to man as it is to God, and must not be confused with immortality. There is no passage in the Book of Psalms which is strong enough to support the inference of immortality, though some would find it, as an exceptional hope, in a verse of the forty-ninth Psalm (15):

> Nevertheless God shall redeem me from the hand of Sheol,
> For He will take me. (Cf. Gen. v. 24; but 'take' probably means no more than 'deliver.')

We seem to be nearer a genuine doctrine of immortality in the great words of the seventy-third Psalm:

> Whom have I (to care for) in heaven?
> And possessing Thee I have pleasure in nothing upon earth.
> Though my flesh and my heart should have wasted away,
> God would for ever be the rock of my heart and my portion.
> (25, 26, Cheyne's trans.)

Here there is undoubtedly a realisation of that fellowship with God which death cannot touch, which is the real root of any doctrine of immortality worthy of the name. But the plant is not grown; there is no evidence that the faith works out its logical consequence. If the Psalmists had held immortality, would the many psalms that clearly deny it have been tolerated? When we remember that the two and only two passages in the Old Testament which speak of a real life beyond death imply a resurrection body, according to the Hebrew idea of personality, we may feel confident that any of the Psalmists who shared this faith would have spoken of it in this way and more definitely, if at all. Their one clear prayer is for a continuance of *this* life, as in the sixteenth Psalm:

For Thou wilt not abandon me to Sheol,
Nor allow any loyal to Thee to see the pit. (10.)

Across man's brief day, therefore, there falls the lengthening shadow of this inevitable end, and different attitudes to it are revealed. In the thirty-ninth Psalm,[1] the attitude is that of melancholy resignation, that checks the folly of complaint about the differing fortunes of men:

Make me, O Jahveh, to know mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is ;
Let me know how transient I am.
Behold thou hast made my days (a few) handbreadths,
And my lifetime is as nothing before Thee:
Only as vanity does every man stand,
Surely in mere semblance man walks to and fro;
Surely for vanity they make tumult,
Heaping up, and not knowing who shall gather. (4–6.)

In the ninetieth Psalm, the thought of the coming and going generations of men is thrown up against the background of the ageless God, terrible in His wrath against the blossoming flower of a day. In the one hundred and third Psalm, the same thought of man's brief day is made a ground of confident appeal for mercy:

As a father has compassion on his sons,
Jahveh has compassion on them that fear Him,
For *He* knoweth our frame,
And remembers that we are dust. (13, 14.)

The thought is like the rainbow that hovers over the waterfall in some dark ravine, when a ray of sunlight falls on the rising mist—beauty pathetic by its brevity. 'Let me live a little longer—because I *must* die.' Perhaps we can be surer here than anywhere else that we have entered into the inner life of the Psalmists; for this is still the instinctive prayer of man,

[1] A Psalm which is transitional, as Balla (*Das Ich der Psalmen*, p. 44) says, to the attitude of Ecclesiastes.

underneath all later homage of the lips to a life beyond death, underneath all Stoic acceptance of human destiny. After all, man is Jahveh's guest upon the earth (xxxix. 12), as well as in the Temple; let the warm realities of hearth and home be ours a little longer, before we step into the dark night:

> Look away from me, that I may brighten up,
> Before I go, and am no more.

2. The consciousness of sin in the inner life of the Psalmists is not so general or so dominant as the priestly ritual of the Temple might suggest, and differs in important respects from that of the New Testament. The moral life of the Psalmists is relatively high, and they have absorbed the ideals of the prophetic teaching. But the idea of sin, as an offence against God, though largely liberated from the old entanglement with taboos and primitive superstitions, is not entirely moralised. On the Godward side, there is the sense of the wrath of God, the mystery of His holiness, still passing beyond the power of man's mind to comprehend, and not wholly ethicised. Again and again we hear the prayer that would otherwise be strange,

> Jahveh, do not in Thine anger rebuke me,
> Nor in Thy wrath correct me. (vi. 1.)
> We come to an end through Thine anger,
> And through Thy wrath are we confounded.
> Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee,
> Our secret (sins) in the light of Thy face. (xc. 7, 8.)

This does not mean that God cannot find moral warrant in man for His judgments: 'If Thou, Jah, shouldst bear iniquities in mind, O Lord, who shall stand?' (cxxx. 3). It is rather that His mysterious personality retains the independence of His own nature, *i.e.* His 'holiness,' and this is something other than 'righteousness,' its moral and legal vindication. Moreover, man's sinfulness is not measured by his own consciousness of it, and the prudent worshipper will pray:

> From faults unconscious absolve me, (xix. 12.)

seeing that unconscious faults may awaken Jahveh's anger and bring adversity.

In correspondence with this larger area of divine 'holiness' as compared with the moral consciousness of man, there is the larger area of observed penalty, or the suffering which is interpreted as penalty. All the Psalmists maintain strenuously the doctrine of moral retribution within this life; no generalisation can be made with greater confidence than this. But the facts of life shew suffering where sin was not known, either in the consciousness of the sufferer, or to the spectator of his life. This gave rise to the general problem of innocent suffering, as faced in the Book of Job and in certain of the Psalms. But for the moment we are concerned with a narrower aspect of it—the attitude of the sufferer who accepted his suffering as the penalty for some unconscious sin, and did not advance, like Job, to a challenge of the doctrine of retribution on the ground of personal innocence. This acceptance of the retributive interpretation of suffering meant naturally that forgiveness was bound up with the removal of the suffering. The spirituality of the idea of forgiveness might easily be obscured, and reconciliation with God be externally and mechanically interpreted. We must not press this unduly, because faith often goes beyond its creed, and there is a power in the human spirit to transform the material to the spiritual, making it sacramental. Just as the Hebrew psychology ascribed personality to the body, and thus lifted the body to what we should call a spiritual significance, so Hebrew theology saw sin beneath the suffering of the body, and divine grace in its restoration to health. A good example of this, on a high level of spiritual religion, is supplied in the thirty-second Psalm, which evidently describes recovery from sickness:

When I was silent my bones wasted away
Through my groaning all the day:
For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me,
My moisture was changed as in the droughts of summer;

My sin I made known unto Thee,
And my iniquity I did not cover;
(When) I said I will confess my transgressions unto Jahveh,
Thou didst remove the guilt of my sin: (3–5.)
(Cf. xxx. 1-3 ; xxxviii. 3 f.)

that is, the sick man became well again.

On the other hand, though we must always think of this as the general outlook, the particular emphasis may so fall on the spiritual side of the identity, that the physical help and restoration become the least part of forgiveness. The one hundred and thirtieth Psalm cries to Jahveh from the depths of a need which is not defined, flings itself on the pardoning, loving and redeeming God, and does not dwell on the material side of His activity—though this is involved. We may see this spiritual emphasis yet more clearly in the fifty-first Psalm, with its classical statement of the Psalmists' doctrine of sin and forgiveness. It is uncertain whether the reference to 'the bones which Thou hast crushed' here implies physical sickness, so that their 'rejoicing' would mean the restoration of physical health; the real point is that the thought of the Psalm is concerned with the inner and spiritual aspect of sin rather than with its undoubted consequences. Sin is here seen to have an upward and a downward reference. In the upward reference it concerns God alone: 'Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned' ; so that God alone can deal with it. In the downward reference, it is deeper than the particular volition in which it was expressed, and springs from a sinful nature:

In iniquity was I brought forth,
And in sin did my mother conceive me.

This is not the doctrine of 'original sin'—but it is the doctrine of racial evil, the universal tendency that is expressed in Isaiah's words also, 'I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.'

The prayer for forgiveness in this Psalm is not less profound. The sinner must be cleansed spiritually, as the leper is cleansed by the blood sprinkled on him with the bunch of hyssop, and by the ritual bath—the leper whose physical state, we must remember, itself needed a sin-offering. But the advance of this Psalm over the ideas imbedded in the original ritual of the leper may be seen in its direct repudiation of atonement by sacrifice:

> Thou delightest not in sacrifice, that I should give it:
> Thou art not pleased with burnt offerings.
> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,
> A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise
> (li. 16, 17 ; cf. xl. 6 f. ; l. 12 f.)

An editorial addition (18, 19) corrects this rather dangerous prophetic doctrine, and adapts the Psalm for use in a Temple which is built on the opposite opinion, the value of the due sacrifices (cf. lxvi. 13–15). The use of such a Psalm as the fifty-first alongside of the ritual it transcends and supersedes may remind us that the Temple worship, like all ritual, was really a framework of different spiritual values experienced by the differing worshippers. Here the Psalmist shews his transcendence of the external relations by the prayer for a new heart and a new will and a new energy to sin no more. In spite of those limitations which have been suggested, there can be no doubt that this Psalm, more nearly than any other part of the Old Testament, approaches the Christian consciousness of sin and grace. There is full justification for the instinct which has made almost every line of this Psalm a universal element of Christian devotion.

3. The fact of death had to be accepted, the burden of sin, whether material or spiritual, might be removed; but a third source of disquietude and perplexity arose from the *incidence* of suffering, the observation that the doctrine of moral retribution within this only life did not agree easily with the actual experi-

ences of men. The devout man could take his misfortunes as the penalties for sins of which he had not become conscious, so long as suffering did not continue to the breaking point. Even short of that, there must have been more than one mute inglorious Job, who in his secret heart could not give up the consciousness of his own innocence. In the Book of Psalms this inevitable consciousness of the injust incidence of suffering is checked by orthodoxy; it is to the irreligious people we must turn, whose sayings are here and there quoted, for the challenge of the doctrine of moral retribution—a challenge which was practical atheism. It is the wicked man whose thoughts are, 'He will not punish; there is no God,' or 'God has forgotten, He has hidden His face' (x. 4, 11). These are the folk who say, 'How should God know? And is there knowledge in the most High?' (lxxiii. 11). When such people, denying or doubting the doctrine of moral retribution and living in manifest defiance of it, seemed to be justified by their practical success, the sorest problem of devout Israel was fashioned, the problem of divine providence. In the contemporary Book of Job, the truth of the doctrine of retribution as represented by the friends is explicitly denied. The Psalmists leave this denial to wicked men, whatever they may have sometimes felt. Their own general attitude to the problem might be described as 'Wait and see.' Thus, in the thirty-seventh Psalm, the writer rebukes the folly of complaint at the prosperity of the evil-doer, when a little while will see him removed, whilst a righteous man, in the writer's declared experience, is never forsaken (10, 25). It should be noticed that he calls in the posterity of the good and the evil (37, 38; cf. R.V. mar.) to redress any balance of retribution left over from the individual life. Even the seventy-third Psalm has not advanced further in the problem of suffering. The Psalmist's anger at the prosperity of the wicked almost carries him away to unbelief (2, 15) like theirs, but in the sanctuary he recovers his troubled faith by the discovery that

such men after all are brought to desolation in a moment and utterly swept off by calamities, that they have no more reality than a bad dream. The forty-ninth Psalm takes comfort in the thought that the most successful of men must die: 'man in his honour does not remain,' and cannot take away his wealth; death waits for all, and none can ransom himself from Sheol. The frequency of the theme shews the gravity of the problem, and the inner life of the individual has not found any answer to it. So far as any answer was found, it must be in the social life of the Psalmists and their corporate significance. The strength of the Psalmists' faith is shewn by the fact that it could face this challenge and for centuries refuse to be daunted by it. When we look at the Psalms as the record of that faith, we discover why they have won such a place in private and public devotion. They deal with the great simplicities of religion, and in the words of a distinguished Cambridge professor, 'The base of all Literature, of all Poetry, of all Theology, is one, and stands on one rock: *the very highest Universal Truth is something so simple that a child may understand it.*'[1] These simplicities are expressed objectively and vividly, partly through the qualities of the age and of the language, partly through the intensity of the experiences described. The result is that the Psalms have supplied a universal vocabulary to theistic religion, a vocabulary never likely to be superseded. Exegesis must handle them critically; devotion will freely use their language to climb to an experience the Psalmists themselves never reached. It was a natural instinct of Calvin's that made him tell the story of his own life as an introduction to his Commentary on the Psalms. He called the Psalter 'the soul's anatomy,' which both mirrors life, and demands life for its true exegesis. There is a rare book in a great library,[2] with a secret pocket in the cover, containing three personal letters of

[1] Q. *On the Art of Reading*, p. 65.

[2] G. C. Williamson, *Stories of an Expert*, p. 210.

appeal, deliverance and gratitude, from a mother whose child's life was saved by the purchase money of the book. It is a parable of the Psalter. How overwhelming is the thought of subsequent human experiences which have gathered round the Psalms, this record of the inner life of Israel's devout community! By spending themselves the Psalmists have all unconsciously bought the gratitude of the world; by going out of their own hearts they have entered for ever those of all devout men.

H Wheeler Robinson.

IV

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PSALMISTS

In our study of the Inner Life of the Psalmists, brief reference was made to its social conditions as inseparable factors of influence. Religion, like morality, is always socially conditioned —or we should rather say that both religion and morality are social products to which there is individual reaction. We have now to consider these social conditions more closely, and some special features of the individual reaction. This brings us face to face with the cardinal difficulty of all study of the Psalms. Their subject-matter is relatively simple, as we have seen; it centres in a few dominant conceptions easily grasped, as the popularity of the Psalms sufficiently shows. But when we begin to study details according to the principles of historical exegesis, we find how singularly elusive the historical background is. The older method of trying to find historical occasions for the composition of particular psalms, a method practised already by Jewish scribes (as the titles of the Psalms shew) has now been abandoned. From the nature of the case prayers and praise-songs, largely for liturgical use, owe their suitability for such use in part to the absence of precise references, or at least to their terms being capable of wide reference. We have always to reckon with the possibility that conventional terms are being employed to express those conventional ideas to which religious lyrics for more than individual use must largely confine themselves. We can see that these conventions

may go back to a long pre-exilic history, and we may even be ready to see a connection with the Babylonian Psalms, direct or indirect. But all this does not help us much to relate the Psalms to a particular historical background; it rather warns us off from trying to find one. We seem to be driven to consider the Psalter as a whole, in the form it finally reached, in order to get anything that can be called a historic setting. Here, at least, we have something definite, though not nearly as definite as we should like. We know that the Psalms were largely used in the worship of the post-exilic community, and were shaped to its religious needs and thoughts—whatever previous history individual psalms may have had. That post-exilic community was not homogeneous; no society is, unless artificially created by selection. There were contemporaries then as different as John Bunyan and Samuel Pepys in the seventeenth century. Not only so, but the religious life of the individual does not coincide with his social life; there are other activities and interests of the Psalmists themselves that lie behind the Psalms, subtly affecting them, yet not explicitly represented in them. The Psalms are concerned with the social life of their times only in its religious aspects. Fortunately, we have a much fuller revelation of the social life of the post-exilic community in the Wisdom literature of the same period, and this may be used to extend our picture of the social life of the Psalmists beyond what was said of it in the previous lecture. We shall then be in a better position to consider the religious significance of the social conception itself —a conception of profound importance for the future history of religion in general, and of the Christian Church in particular. If the first half of this lecture seems to travel beyond our precise subject, the fact must be remembered that its title is the social life, not of the Psalms, but of the Psalmists, and that for this it is necessary to look beyond the Book of Psalms. But references will be given to frequent parallels in the Psalter.

The Book of Proverbs, like the Book of Psalms, undoubtedly contains many pre-exilic elements, but as a literary work it is post-exilic, and broadly contemporaneous with the Psalter. It is the product not of a nation enjoying more or less of political independence, but of a relatively small community organised on a religious basis, politically governed by a Persian governor, and a quite negligible item in the vast Persian Empire. This community is said to have numbered between forty and fifty thousand *men*, with their families and dependents, at the close of the Exile (Ezra ii. 64 = Neh. vii. 66), but these numbers are more likely to be true towards the writer's own time, say about 300 B. C.[1] We may think, then, of say two hundred thousand men, women and children, settled in Jerusalem and the surrounding districts, with their smaller towns, within a radius of a very few miles. Many of these were engaged in agriculture, but an increasing number were drawn to the commercial and trading pursuits of the city. Even at the time when Nehemiah came to re-organise the community (444), we read of different trades, apparently grouped in different streets or bazaars, such as the goldsmiths, the perfumers and the merchants, whilst Phoenician traders brought fish from the Mediterranean, and other articles for sale. Nehemiah had specially to complain of the moneylenders and their exactions. Much of the Book of Proverbs pre-supposes city life, with its frequent intercourse and festivities, its commercial occupations, its special temptations. The Temple is its religious centre, and the Jewish Law, established through the activity of Ezra and Nehemiah, its professed basis. But the nationalism and legalism which characterise the Jewish religion were not so intense as they afterwards became through the Greek persecution which led to the Maccabean Revolt. The Book of Proverbs addresses

[1] Cf. Batten, 'Ezra and Nehemiah,' *International Critical Commentary*, p. 73 : 'Allowing for corruption, this may be an authentic census of Israel in the latter part of the Persian period.'

men as men, and says little about organised religion, though it bids men honour Jahveh with their substance and with the first-fruits of their increase (iii. 9). The wise men, like many of the Psalmists, have learnt from the prophets to distrust merely outward rites:

> The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to Jahveh:
> But the prayer of the upright is His delight.
> (xv. 8 ; cf. Ps. l. 14 ; li 16 f.)
>
> To do justice and judgment
> Is more acceptable to Jahveh than sacrifice.
> (xxi. 3 ; cf. Ps. xl. 6.)

The picture of home and family life which we gain from the Book of Proverbs is an attractive one. It is rightly claimed by Jewish writers that the spirit of family solidarity has become a corner-stone in the sanctuary of Israel's ethics. The closing poem of the Book in praise of the virtuous woman gives most interesting glimpses of the better-class household. It is a well-ordered house, in which the wife is the business manager, whilst the husband is set free for public duties. Her oversight and example of personal industry inspire her servants: 'she openeth her mouth with wisdom and the law of kindness is on her tongue.' She does not neglect the outward adorning of fine linen and purple, yet, 'strength and dignity are her clothing,' so that 'her children rise up and call her blessed.' Nothing is said about the teaching of religion in the home, apart from the moral influence of this well-ordered house; but the theoretical side of religious education belonged more distinctly to the father's duty, as we may see from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, in which the father replies to the questions of the son by saying, 'We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and Jahveh brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.' The father's relation to his children naturally brings in the sterner note of discipline. A wise man compares divine reproof with that of a father (iii. 12), as a contemporary prophet com-

pares divine comfort with that of a mother (Is. lxvi. 13). The wise men would not have favoured the Kindergarten and Montessori methods of education:

> Folly is bound to the mind of a child,
> But the rod of correction will remove it. (xxii. 15.)

The frequent warnings against sexual immorality are often coloured by the thought of the wrong done to family life, the breach of loyalty to the ties of the home. But the home may be spoilt in other ways:

> It is better to dwell in a desert land,
> Than with a contentious woman and vexation. (xxi. 19.)
> A foolish son is ruin to his father,
> And the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping. (xix. 13.)

But the home-making wife is set above all other possessions:

> House and riches are an inheritance from fathers,
> But a prudent wife is from Jahveh.
> (xix. 14; cf. Pss. cxxvii., cxxviii.)

Next to the home and family life, we may think of the business occupations of agriculture in the country and commerce within the city. Men work chiefly because they have to, and the pleasure-seeker is bound to come to grief. The folly of the sluggard receives special attention; if he will not be taught by the instinct of the industrious ant (vi. 6), then others will be taught by the sight of his untilled field and neglected vineyard, with thorns and nettles and broken wall (xxiv. 30 f.). The sluggard sleeps in harvest time, when all are wanted in the fields (x. 5); he is like acid to the teeth or smoke to the eyes of those who employ him (x. 26). Too lazy to plough in winter, he looks in vain for a harvest (xx. 4), and always has excuses ready: 'There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets' (xxii. 13). He turns on his bed as a door on its hinges (xxvi. 14), and the height of satire is reached in the words:

> The lazy man dips his hand in the dish
> And will not bring it even to his mouth. (xix. 24.)

The prudent man, on the other hand, gets his farm into good going order, before he sets up a household (xxiv. 27), and will have plenty of oxen for ploughing (xiv. 4); where the land is not suited for grain-growing, he will raise oxen and sheep (xxvii. 23 f.).

In commerce, as distinct from agriculture, the subjects which claim most attention in this community are the need for honest dealing in buying and selling, and the folly of becoming surety for other people:

> Different weights and different measures,
> Both of these are an abomination to Jahveh. (xx. 10.)
> Balance and just scales are Jahveh's,
> All the weights of the bag are His work. (xvi. 11.)

But there are ways of being dishonest more subtle than the possession of two sets of weights. One familiar trick of the bargainer, as in all ages, is to disparage that which he intends to buy:

> 'Bad! bad!' says the buyer,
> But when he has gone, then he boasts. (xx. 14.)

Equally modern is the 'corner' in grain:

> He who withholds corn, the people curse him,
> But blessing is on the head of him that sells it. (xi. 26.)

The power of capital over the 'under-dog' was felt then as now:

> The rich rules over the poor, (Cf. Ps. lii. 7; xlix. 6.)
> And the borrower is slave to the lender. (xxii. 7.)

All interest on loans between Israelites was felt to be wrong, but Hebrew legislation had evidently failed to check this inevitable development:

> He who adds to his wealth by taking interest and increase
> Gathers it for him who is kind to the poor.
> (xxviii. 8; cf. Pss. xv. 5, xxxvii. 21, 26.)

Quite a number of passages warn prudentially against the perils of suretyship for another; it is like being a gazelle in

the hands of the hunter, and a bird in the hand of the fowler (vi. 5).

The references to the rich and poor seem to shew that they are brought into closer personal contact than in the relations of more specialised and elaborate social orders:

> The rich and the poor meet together,
> Jahveh is the maker of them all.
> (xxii. 2; cf. Ps. xlix. 6, 10.)
>
> The poor man and the oppressor meet together,
> Jahveh lighteneth the eyes of them both. (xxix. 13.)

Both wealth and poverty bring their characteristic perils:

> Give me neither poverty nor riches;
> Feed me with the bread of my allotted portion:
> Lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is Jahveh?
> (Cf. Ps. lxxiii. 11.)
>
> Or lest I be poor and steal,
> And do violence to the name of my God. (xxx. 8, 9.)

Another temptation of wealth is bribery, the lurking spectre of the Oriental court of justice, with its accompaniment of unjust decisions and false witness. We note that crimes of violence are amongst those perpetrated in this largely urban community, and that the young man is warned against being drawn into them, and we recall the frequent references to such violence in the Psalms (vii. 16, etc.). The young man is also warned against sensuality, chiefly on the ground of its social consequences, whether in the form of adultery or of harlotry, and a very dramatic picture is drawn of the young man void of understanding who is waylaid in the twilight, and allured from chastity. Gluttony and drunkenness are equally present, and are rebuked also largely on the ground of their consequences. Moderation and modesty are specially commended when meals are taken with men of position.

One of the most frequent topics in the Book of Proverbs, as in the Book of Psalms, is that of the mischief of gossip and

slander (Pss. xv. 3, xxvii. 12, xxxv. 15, ci. 5, etc.), the capacity of talk to do ill (Ps. lii. 2 f.), the zest of men to hear evil of others: 'death and life are in the power of the tongue' (Prov. xviii. 21). This was a community of talkers, and none could be more irritating than the unctuous and insincere, the ancient Pecksniff:

> He that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning,
> It shall be counted a curse to him. (xxvii. 14.)

We are reminded of the insincere visitor of one of the Psalmists (xli. 5 f.) in his sickness:

> But mine enemies speak evil of me,
> 'When will he die, and his name perish?'
> And if one comes to see me, he utters unreality,
> His heart gathers mischief to itself;
> He goes abroad and utters it.
> All that hate me whisper together against me,
> Against me do they devise evil,
> 'A fatal disease is poured out upon him,
> And now that he lies, he will rise up no more;'
> Even the man of my peace, in whom I trusted,
> He who ate of my bread, has dealt treacherously with me
> (Cf. Ps. lv. 12 f.)

The higher morality of the Book of Proverbs moves largely with that of the Psalms.

Justice is urged on both rulers and citizens:

> Rob not the poor because he is poor,
> Neither oppress the lowly in the gate.
> (xxii. 22; cf. Ps. lxxxii. 2 f.)

Such conceptions of justice easily pass into the obligation of mercy:

> Say not to thy neighbour, Go and come again,
> And to-morrow I will give,
> When thou hast it by thee. (iii. 28.)

There is a passage that suggests from afar the parable of the Good Samaritan:

Deliver them that are carried away unto death,
And those that are ready to be slain see that thou hold back.
(Cf. Ps. lxxxii. 4.)

If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this :
Doth not He that weigheth the hearts consider it ?
(xxiv. 11, 12.)

If men rejoice in the fall of a personal enemy, they may arouse divine displeasure. Modesty, humility and self-restraint are commended, self-righteousness, arrogance and rapacity condemned. One passage from the sixth chapter of Proverbs is the best summary of the moral teaching of the book (16–19), and forms a close parallel to the requirements of the guest-Psalms (xv., xxiv.), the qualities of the man who may take refuge and sanctuary in Jahveh's house:

There be six things that Jahveh hates;
Yea, seven which are an abomination unto Him;
Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood;
A heart that devises wicked schemes;
Feet that hasten in running to mischief;
A false witness who utters lies,
And he who sows discord among brethren.

The general agreement of the social life revealed in the Proverbs with that less clearly suggested in the Psalms confirms us in using the one book to elucidate the other. The differences are no more than those of a different angle of approach; the life is substantially the same, but in the Psalms we have a more intense and a more definitely religious interpretation of it. We have always to remember that the Psalms no more reveal the whole life of their writers and their times than do our own hymn-books, and that like our hymn-books, the Psalms express intensities of experience which were the exception rather than

the rule. The Psalmists were only occasionally drawn from the circle of the wise men (*e.g.* xlix.), but they shared the same social life.

We may find further confirmation in the picture of the social life of Jerusalem which comes to us from Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), somewhat later in the post-exilic period. We have already mentioned[1] his enthusiastic description of the Temple service of his time, and we have specimens of his own work as a psalmist (li.). His keen interest in the social life of his time suggests that of the poet described by Browning whom 'you saw go up and down Valladolid,' scenting the world, looking it full in the face, the poet whom Browning has aptly provided even with a Jewish nose:

> such a brow
> His eyes had to live under! clear as flint
> On either side the formidable nose
> Curved, cut and coloured like an eagle's claw. . .
> He stood and watched the cobbler at his trade,
> The man who slices lemons into drink,
> The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the boys
> That volunteer to help him turn its winch.

Even so we may conceive Ben Sirach poking his way about the streets of old Jerusalem, and in his own reflective manner, 'doing the King's work all the dim day long.' We think of his series of miniatures of the occupations of men (xxxviii. 24 ff.) —the farmer, whose discourse is of the stock of bulls, the careful engraver of signets, the smith glowing with the heat of his furnace, the potter working his wheel with his feet, and the glory of the scribe who ascends where they cannot.[2] His own shrewd comments on these lives of men are much like those of the Proverbs. He warns against greediness at a great man's table, lest you spend a sleepless night of indigestion (xxxi. 12 ff.). But life has other troubles. What a time, for

[1] P. 48. [2] We may compare Ps. cvii., noting its different *motif*.

example, the father of daughters has! He cannot sleep for thinking of them (xlii. 9 f.); they may remain unmarried until they have lost their chances, or they may bring disgrace upon his house. The only thing to do with a daughter is to see to it that 'in the place where she lodgeth there be no lattice, or spot overlooking the entrance round about' (xlii. 11, Hebrew). He knows the misery of a home that is no home:

> I would rather dwell with a lion and a dragon,
> Than keep house with a wicked woman . . .
> In the midst of his friends her husband sitteth,
> And involuntarily he sigheth bitterly. (xxv. 16–18.)

Yet he knows the other side:

> Three things hath my soul desired,
> And they are lovely in the sight of God and men:
> The concord of brethren, and the friendship of neighbours,
> And a husband and wife suited to each other.
> (xxv. 1; cf. Ps. cxxxiii. 1.)

He emphasises the value of friendship, and warns against its abuse, especially in the matter of suretyship. He speaks as strongly as do the Proverbs and the Psalms about the mischief of gossip and slander (xxviii. 13). Even when such talkativeness is not malicious, it can be annoying and out of place, as at a concert:

> Speak, O elder, for it is thy privilege:
> But be discreet in understanding, and hinder not song.
> In a place of music pour not forth talk,
> And at an unseasonable time display not thy wisdom.
> As a signet-stone of carnelian on a necklace (?) of gold
> Is a concert of music at a banquet of wine. (xxxii. 3–6.)[1]

The well-known passage relating to the physician is of special interest because of the frequent references to sickness in the Psalms. Ben Sirach is apparently claiming a due place for the

[1] The translations given above are taken from the version in Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*.

physician in the healing of sickness, as against the faith-healers of his day (xxxviii.). The first thing to do in sickness is, of course, to pray to God and put away any sin that may be the cause of this sickness. The next thing is to offer the proper sacrifices in the Temple. But in the third place, the physician should not be neglected, for his wisdom comes from God, both in diagnosis and treatment. The reference shews us how a religious man of the world, such as Ben Sirach, could reconcile the worlds of nature and of grace, in both of which he was a citizen.

II. It will be seen that the social life of the post-exilic community, as revealed in the Book of Proverbs and in Ecclesiasticus, forms a generally harmonious background to the religious life revealed in the Psalms. The dominant note in that religious life was trust, usually a joyful and confident trust in Jahveh. Both lines of literature shew a clear emphasis on moral conduct and character such as the great prophets had urged, and a strong belief in that doctrine of exact divine retribution which was central in their teaching. Everything we know of the prophets of the eighth and seventh and sixth centuries suggests that *they* were pioneers, isolated from the mass of the nation by the very line they took. But both the Psalms and the Wisdom literature, considered as wholes, suggest that they represent the application of already existent prophetic doctrine to religious faith and to moral conduct respectively, and the gradual and partial popularisation of prophetic truth. In the course of this application certain difficulties were inevitably encountered, and chief amongst them was the failure of the doctrine of exact retribution to correspond with the actual experience of individual lives. The Wisdom literature, which is the nearest approach to a Hebrew philosophy, faced this problem on the grand scale in the daring challenge of the Book of Job. But the Psalmists, or some of them, also faced it, along the practical lines of their life as a community within the

congregation of Israel. Again and again in the Psalms we hear of 'enemies,' who are characterised in the strongest terms. Who were these enemies? what kind of consciousness of itself belonged to this *ecclesiola in ecclesia*? how did it relate its experience of suffering to the conception of Israel's mission which sprang from its faith in Jahveh?

We cannot answer the question, 'Who were the enemies of the Psalmists?' as simply as it was once answered in an examination-paper: 'The pious wrote the Psalms and all the rest were their enemies.' No book of the Bible recounts the history of post-exilic Judaism, and Josephus, who attempts to do it, shews us by the scarcity and inconsistency of his data how little he knew about it. Almost all we can say with entire confidence is that, when this community comes into the light of history, at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to Hellenise Judaism, we can see how divided the community was. There was the militant nationalistic party, headed by the Maccabees, fighting for both religious and political freedom. They were supported by those religious enthusiasts, whom we know as the Chasidim, or 'pious' (I Macc. ii. 42), who seem to have been satisfied with the prospect of religious freedom (vii. 13, 14). They were opposed by the Hellenising Jews, chiefly drawn, we may suppose, from the upper classes. Of these groups, the Chasidim were the forerunners of the later Pharisees, and the successors of the godly community which speaks to us in the Psalms. We may trace them back to those of whom we hear about the middle of the fifth century, in the Book of Malachi (iii. 16), 'Then they that feared Jahveh spake one with another: and Jahveh hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared Jahveh, and that thought upon His name.' Indeed, we may go back further still, to the disciples of Isaiah (viii. 16), to whom he entrusted his testimony. That act was, as Buchanan Gray suggested

(*Isaiah*, p. 155), 'an important epoch in the history of religion—the emergence of a spiritual, as distinct from a national, religious society.' But if we bring the pious community, the godly poor, of the Book of Psalms, into this succession, extending over a number of centuries, we shall hardly feel justified in seeking for a single definition of the 'enemies' of the pious. In the first instance, they would be the enemies of the prophets and of the followers of the prophets. Later on, when the Jewish community is organised in and around Jerusalem after the exile, they may be any of those who menaced the existence either of that community, or of its spiritual and moral ideals, such as Persian or Greek rulers acting unjustly, or the sister groups of peoples round about Jerusalem, such as the Samaritans and Edomites, or godless Jews, opposing the disciples of the prophets, as their fathers had opposed the prophets, those godless Jews whose successors were ready to become Hellenists, when Hellenism became the expedient fashion. The probability is that as these Psalms were sung or read by successive generations of the godly, the connotation of 'enemies' changed with the generations; the original phrases remained after the circumstances of their origin were forgotten (just as we see Jeremiah adapting to the Babylonians prophecies which originally referred to the Scythians). The attempts made to secure the simplicity of one predominant reference in 'enemies' are not very convincing, whether by bringing down such Psalms to the actual violence of the Maccabean period (Duhm), or by carrying their phraseology back to Babylonian sources, and treating the enemies as magicians, who work evil spells of sickness and disaster (Mowinckel). We must not even seek to bring all such hostility under the rubric of a malicious use of the retribution theory against the godly in their times of trouble (Baumgartner), though this may have frequently sharpened the bitterness (cf. xli. 6 f.). How far the hostility of what we may call 'the world' to 'the church' issued in actual violence is

open to question, though some of the references may imply this (*e.g.* x. 8), and we must remember the more primitive conditions of life, and the fact that some of the national enemies were literally 'at the gates.' Slander and bribery would usually enable unprincipled men to secure their ends without actual violence.

When we try, then, to reconstruct the social horizon, as seen by the Psalmists in general, we must put ourselves at the standpoint of an inner circle of pious and mostly poor men, who are conscious of continuing the work of the prophets in teaching, and of Josiah and Nehemiah in reformation—an inner circle zealous for the worship of the Temple, and for the true spiritual religion which it ought to represent, and from time to time forced to suffer for their faith. Socially intermingled with them are the majority of the people, who share with them in the worship of the Temple, and in some sort of recognition of the Law, though 'legalistic' religion became predominant only towards the close of the Psalter. This majority, like most majorities, is partly indifferent and worldly, partly scornful or antagonistic to the ideals of the 'pious.' Some of them are cruel and treacherous, hypocrites in whatever religion they profess. This is the nearest environment of the inner circle of the pious, socially one with them, but wanting in the inner spirit of religion. Next comes the ruling class, partly Jewish, and partly foreign. Here, again, there is variety of character, good and bad, religious and irreligious; but we may fairly suppose that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, belonged to the class from which the Psalms have mostly come. Then, beyond this group of the ruling classes, we have the heathen or half-heathen environment, the various nationalities of Palestine and its borders, only loosely controlled by the Persian or Greek powers. Sometimes these would represent a religious antagonism, as with the Samaritans; sometimes the motive to oppress and attack the Jews would be

simply the desire for plunder or captives. Here, again, the less patriotic or nationalistic Jews, those who had made prudent foreign alliances, would come off better than their more conscientious or zealous brethren. All these conditions were more or less intermittent, as were the sufferings of Christians in the Roman Empire before the imperial recognition of Christianity, though there may have been special periods, as in the time of Artaxerxes Ochus, which occasioned direct physical sufferings like those of many in the Maccabean struggle, or again under Antiochus the Great (from 223 B.C.) when Judaea is compared by Josephus (*Antiq.* xii. iii. 3) with a ship in a storm, tossed by the waves on both sides.

A further question of exegesis, about which a great deal has been written, concerns the personality of the speaker in the Psalms. Is the Psalmist who says 'I' speaking primarily of his individual life and experience, or is he consciously representing a larger group, whether the community of the godly, or Israel as a whole? Our modern individualism, and our Western habit of thought, make the English reader of the Psalms refer instinctively to the individuality of the Psalmist. When we read:

> 'For my days have vanished like smoke,
> And my bones are burned through like a hearth,' (cii. 3.)

we seem to be listening to an individual complaint, however many individuals might be ready to share in it, and make it theirs. But then we find psalms where the terms of reference are quite as individual, and yet the speaker is not one but many, as in Ps. cxxix:

> Much have they vexed me from my youth—
> Thus let Israel say—
> Much have they vexed me from my youth,
> Yet have they not prevailed against me.
> The ploughers ploughed upon my back,
> And made their furrows long.

Jahveh is righteous, He hath cut asunder
The cords of the wicked
Let them be shamed and turned back,
All the haters of Zion.

Here it is evident that the speaker is Israel as a nation, speaking of its long history from the days of Egypt onwards, just as the prophet Hosea says, 'When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt' (xi. 1).[1] This is much more than what we mean by personification; it is corporate personality, the consciousness of Israel as a unity, which underlies such customs as blood revenge, and the whole conception of a covenant between Jahveh and Israel. We have nothing quite like it in modern thought, which sets the individual over against the society in a way the ancient world never did. One result of this corporate personality is that a speaker can pass much more readily from the consciousness of an individual experience to its representative character, and so to the experience of the group with which he identifies himself.[2] This is why the discussion about the 'I' of the Psalms is so inconclusive, and why the interpretation tends to swing from one side to the other. A generation ago the tendency was to emphasise the social significance of the speaker, as representing Israel, or the pious part of it. To-day, the tendency is to recover the individual significance, especially in the light of the similar Babylonian Psalms. As Mr. C. G. Montefiore says, 'The truth lies in between . . . the community is never very far off. The fact that the writer is an Israelite, that he is a member of the community, the people of God, that his God is the God of Israel, are never far below the horizon of his consciousness. In one sense these very facts constitute the

[1] Note the detail with which Hosea works out the figure of the father teaching the child to walk and carrying it when tired—though the child is really the community.

[2] Cf. Dan. vii. 18, where 'the saints of the most High' are the single human figure of verse 13.

strength of the Psalter: in one sense they give it value. But to some extent they detract from its purely *human* value, and more especially from its power and interest as a purely human document.'[1]

This loss of individual interest is not to be denied, and in one way it makes the Psalms much less interesting psychologically than the records of the Prophets. But there is a great compensation through this socialisation of the individual experience. We see before us the working out of Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant, the democratisation of the prophetic consciousness. The godly community may not possess the interest of his personality, or rise to his spiritual level, but then it is many where he was one. As the orchestra offers opportunities of expression to the composer which the most brilliant soloist cannot give, so the corporate consciousness and common experience of the godly community offered new opportunities of revelation to God. We may take as an example the twenty-second Psalm, that striking parallel to the conception of the Servant of Jahveh in Deutero-Isaiah. Here there are individualistically conceived traits such as:

> I am a worm and no man,
> A reproach of men and despised of people (6) . . .
> They divide my garments among them,
> And cast lots upon my clothing (18).

When we further read,

> From Thee is my praise (as I sing) in the great assembly,
> My vows will I pay in the presence of them that fear Him (25),

it is clearly an individual consciousness that is uppermost. Yet when the speaker says of his troubles:

> Many bulls have surrounded me,
> Strong ones of Bashan have encompassed me (12) . . .
> Dogs have surrounded me,
> The company of evil-doers have encircled me (16),

[1] *The Old Testament and After*, pp. 282, 283.

it is much more natural to think of the experience of the pious community, the Israel within Israel, suffering for its faith, the prophetic religion it carries on, and so identifying itself with Jahveh as to be able to say:

> The reproaches of them that reproached Thee have fallen on me. (lxix. 9.)

There is here something more than what we have, for example, in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, where the poet consciously passes from his individual sorrow to discuss the sorrow and problem of bereavement in general. The speaker in the twenty-second Psalm is not taking his own sorrows as typical of those of others; he is gathering up the actual sorrows of the community of which he is part, and at the same time becoming conscious of Israel's continued mission and service through the generations. Israel's mission is to bring it about that

> All the ends of the earth shall remember and return unto Jahveh,
> And all the families of the nations shall bow down before Thee (27).

The problem of interpretation here seems to be much the same as in regard to the Servant of Jahveh songs, where also there is the same vexed question as to whether the reference is individual or social. In both instances, the final solution may come through a clearer recognition of the place and character of corporate personality in ancient psychology.[1] The fact seems to be that *our* distinction and contrast does not hold, and therefore the issue cannot be settled in our terms. But whereas the prophet of Isaiah liii. projects his own consciousness into an interpretation of the past sufferings of Israel *as a nation*, and of the consequences of its future restoration, the Psalmist is gathering into his own consciousness the present sufferings of *that inner Israel* to which he belongs. For this pious com-

[1] Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, pp. 27 ff.

munity was in the great succession through which the world's chiefest spiritual treasures have come.

This community is the only 'Servant of Jahveh' answering to Isaiah liii. that history knows until there arose a new prophetic consciousness in Jesus with richer content, and a new social democratisation of that consciousness in the Christian Church. In both instances, the Cross of suffering has been essential to the content. The religion of the Bible insists on the *reality* of history; the way of experience is the way of revelation. We may therefore say of the Psalmists that whilst the continuity of their faith and work through a number of generations enabled them to reach a catholicity of utterance which no single consciousness could have attained, their experience of suffering was the essential condition for the full emergence of that faith

> Stand like a beaten anvil, when thy dream
> Is laid upon thee, golden from the fire
> Flinch not, though heavily through that furnace-gleam
> The black forge-hammers fall on thy desire.
>
> Stand like a beaten anvil. Let earth's wrong
> Beat on that iron and ring it back in song.[1]

[1] Alfred Noyes, 'The Anvil.'

H. Wheeler Robinson.

V

THE ESCHATOLOGY OF THE PSALMISTS

He who believes that the physical universe or the present world order came into existence at a particular time or in a given way, is sure to ask himself how the end also will come. It will generally be noticed that there is a certain resemblance between men's theory of the origin of things and the conclusion which they expect. If the one is evolutionary, the other will be a process of slow and gradual extinction; if the one is cataclysmic, the other will be catastrophic. In a broad sense, every form of religion, every kind of science, every scheme of philosophy, has its eschatology, unless, indeed, it insists on the indestructibility alike of the matter and of the form of its subject. An eschatology is the natural corollary of a cosmogony. A religion which holds that its God (or one of its gods) brought the world into being for some definite purpose, will be almost sure to find that, sooner or later, it must, for its own satisfaction, predict the way in which that same Deity will bring His creation to an end. We may take it for granted that, broadly speaking, the Israelite cosmogony, of which mention has been made in a previous lecture, will furnish the model for Israelite eschatology.

It is true that there are periods in the history of every religion when its eschatology is more prominent than at others These are practically always times of suffering. Men find the world

about them so bad that it seems to them that even God cannot mend matters. The normal methods by which the universe is ruled, and human affairs are directed, have led to manifold disaster, and it would appear that there must be some violent reversal, some catastrophic interference of the supreme powers, if any remedy is to be attained. Human patience is often too weak to contemplate the strain of the long process of gradual amelioration; men are always in a hurry. To them it seems as if God Himself could improve the situation only by violent and miraculous acts of destruction, that He must crush back the vessel, marred upon the wheel, into a shapeless lump of clay, and from it proceed to make a new vessel which shall be after His own heart.

Our present task is to attempt an estimate of the extent to which ideas of this type have influenced the Psalmists or are reflected in their poetry. And it may be as well at the outset to attempt some line of demarcation between eschatology and ordinary prophecy. Both foretell the future—in greater or less degree. Both assume the interference of Jahveh in human affairs, and both look for His justification of the interests for which the prophet or the apocalyptist speaks. Yet there seems to me to be this difference. In ordinary prophecy the agents and instruments which Jahveh uses to achieve His consummation are natural. Of course everything that happens is, to the ancient Hebrew mind, a direct and separate act of God. But some are normal. War, pestilence, drought, famine and earthquake are all only too familiar, and the prophets themselves had seen practical illustrations of most of the calamities which they foretold. But the disasters which eschatology predicts are entirely outside the previous experience of men. There is wholesale confusion and destruction in the material world, the sun is darkened and the moon fails, the stars fall from their places and the earth boils into chaos. Monstrous creatures, such as men have never known before, inflict untold suffering on the

wretches who have survived other disasters. So strange is the world which comes into being that the old modes of divine activity are inadequate to its production, and the birth of the new universe is heralded by phenomena which are not merely miraculous but unprecedented.

Another characteristic feature of all true eschatology is that it is not simply national but universal. The prophet tells of events which will affect his own people, bringing to them either bliss or woe. But eschatology is, as we have already noted, the corollary of cosmogony, and has as wide a scope and range. It is not merely the land in which the prophet lives or the people to whom he belongs that is affected; the whole cosmic structure is involved, and all nations alike must share in the doom or the triumph. There is, no doubt, a limited group of human beings, whether national or narrower still, which will receive special consideration, but this preferential treatment serves only to throw into stronger relief the universal range of the anticipated calamity.

It is unnecessary for us here to elaborate what is so familiar as the distinction between the eschatology of bliss (perhaps better described as 'patriotic'), held by the popular mind from pre-prophetic times, and the eschatology of woe (more properly called 'ethical'), on which the pre-exilic prophets themselves so often dwelt. Nor need we do more than note in passing that post-exilic eschatology united these two, and, seeing in Israel a people morally holy to Jahveh, identified the political and the moral aspects of their belief. But, inasmuch as it has been maintained on the one hand that our Psalter is steeped in eschatology, and on the other that there is little or no trace of this cycle of thought to be found there, it will be well for us briefly to note one or two of the outstanding features of the later apocalyptic.

The first of these is the visible and physical, or semi-physical, reign of Jahveh on earth, inaugurated by world-wide and

cataclysmic miracle, and frequently involving a universal judgment. It is more than a theophany such as we have in Ps. xxix., because it marks a sharp division between the old world of previous experience and the new world of which man as yet knows nothing save in prophetic vision. The second and third features are by no means invariable, even in the later apocalyptic, but they are in a real sense characteristic of the whole movement of thought. One of these is the appearance of a *mashî'ach*, an Anointed One, usually of the house of David, who, whether he be the agent of the world doom or the prince who is to rule the world after that doom has been accomplished, is something more than an ordinary monarch. The other is the development of a personal eschatology, a belief in a life after death for the individual, whether it be the strictly Hebrew conception of the renewed physical existence upon earth of reanimated bodies, or the more truly Greek prospect of a purer spiritual life in heaven for souls liberated once and for all from the chains of matter.

Over twenty years ago, Professor Gressmann[1] began his study of the Hebrew form of eschatology with references to the belief in theophany. Mention has already been made to the divine appearance on earth as depicted in the Psalter, more particularly as it is described in Pss. xviii. and xxix. It should be unnecessary further to elaborate this point, and we may merely remind ourselves that whenever Jahveh appears, it is naturally as King that He comes. To His earthly reign we have numerous allusions:

> Clap your hands, all ye peoples:
> Shout to God in ringing cries.
> For Jahveh is most high and dread,
> A great King over all the earth
>
> For King of all earth is He:
> Praise God in a skilful song.
> God is King over all nations,
> God sits on His holy throne. (xlvii. 1, 2, 7, 8.)

[1] *Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie.*

For Jahveh is a great God,
King above all gods. (xcv. 3.)

Say to the nations, 'Jahveh is King.'
Yea, the world standeth firm—to be shaken no more.
(xcvi. 10.)

Jahveh is King, let the earth rejoice:
Let her many isles be glad. (xcvii. 1.)

Jahveh is King; let the nations tremble:
He is throned upon cherubs; let earth quake.
Jahveh is great in Zion,
He is high over all the nations. (xcix. 1, 2.)

At this point we ought to notice the theory of Mowinckel,[1] who holds that the Psalms from which these citations are taken were especially composed for or used in the ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles This ritual Mowinckel believes to have been an elaborate drama of the enthronement of Jahveh, in the course of which the Ark or some other divine emblem was taken annually from some spot in Jerusalem to its regular home in the sanctuary. In part this ceremonial is historic in its associations, and commemorates the induction of the Ark to Zion by David. But such a ritual is seldom merely retrospective. As Gray[2] has pointed out, whilst the celebration of the Passover by the modern Jew carries the participant back to the ancient triumph of the Exodus, it also points him to a future day when his faith will be vindicated, not only in deliverance but also in victory and conquest. And it is unnecessary to remark that even the central act of Christian worship has an eschatological aspect, and that though the words may be very differently interpreted by different worshippers, yet none can hear or utter the simple phrase 'Until He come,' without a sense, dim or clear, of a fuller communion beyond the frontiers of time. It is, then, natural to suggest that this ancient ritual of the Feast of Tabernacles was more than tinged with eschatology.

[1] *Psalmenstudien*, ii. [2] *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, pp. 379 ff.

Mowinckel may be right, but we are justified in asking for something more than the enthronement of Jahveh before we commit ourselves to an eschatological theory of these or any other of the Psalms. It is not enough that Jahveh should merely become King or even that He should become King over all humanity, as some of these passages suggest; this might imply the prospect of a simple theocracy. There will be also certain marked and characteristic accompaniments of His assumption of power, and events will take place to which we should apply the term miraculous. These are not altogether wanting. We notice in particular the effect of His appearance on the material world. We have not only such expressions of His power as those which we find in Ps. xxix., where His voice alone suffices to shatter the cedars of Lebanon, makes the hills leap and dance, and rends the desert, but we have also such Psalms as lxvi., where, indeed, the title of King is not used, though the whole poem is based on the assumption of the absolute sovereignty of Jahveh. Here the listener is exhorted:

> Come and see what God hath done,
> Awe-inspiring is He in His works among men.
> He turneth the sea into dry land,
> And men cross the river on foot. (vv. 5–6.)

The historical reference is, no doubt, to the Red Sea and to the crossing of Jordan, but we may guess that the Psalmist does not entirely separate the past from the future, and that what Jahveh has done once, He will do again. Perhaps the clearest evidence of this abnormal power comes from Ps. xcvii., of which the first verse has already been quoted. After the statement that Jahveh is King, the poet continues:

> Clouds and darkness are round about Him,
> Justice and right are the base of His throne.
> Fire goeth before Him,
> And blazeth round His steps.
> His lightnings illumine the world:
> The earth quakes at the sight.

Mountains melt like wax
Before the Lord of all the earth. (vv. 2–5.)

Elsewhere, again, the miracles of the past seem to be cited as evidence of yet greater wonders to come. So, with reference to the Exodus the author of Ps. cxiv. says:

The sea saw it and fled,
The Jordan turned him back.
Mountains skipped like rams,
Hills like the young of the flock. (vv. 3–4.)

But after the retrospect comes the warning:

Earth, tremble before the Lord
At the presence of Jacob's God. (v. 7.)

In time of bitter suffering at the hands of their enemies the people cry out for a repetition of the great deeds of the past:

Yet God is our King from ancient days,
In the midst of the earth working deeds of salvation
It was Thou that didst cleave the sea by Thy might,
And shiver the heads of the ocean monsters.
It was Thou that didst crush many-headed Leviathan,
And gave him as food to the beasts of the wilderness.
It was Thou that didst cleave the fountains and torrents;
It was Thou that didst dry the perennial streams.
(lxxiv. 12–15.)

All this, of course, is ostensibly the work of creation with further reference to the Exodus, but, as we have already seen, there is a tendency to assimilate the end to the beginning, and we may suspect that beneath the actual language there lies the thought that Jahveh may be able and willing to do again in defence of His oppressed people the marvels that He wrought both in creating the world and in delivering Israel from Egypt.

In all eschatology we may take it that the power to work miracles in nature is less emphasised than the power to control man. One of its more important aspects is always the victory which it promises over the enemies of Israel and of her God.

This is a very familiar feature of the language of the Psalmists, and cannot always be regarded as eschatological. When, in Ps. xi. 6, Jahveh rains down fire and brimstone on the wicked, He still remains in His heavenly Temple, and there is no thought of His coming to earth to take a terrestrial throne. This is one of the acts that may normally be expected of Him, when the need arises. The reference in Ps. xlviii., too, seems to be confined to a historic deliverance from some definite assailant, who has been defeated through the moral help that Jahveh has rendered His people:

> Once God made Himself known
> As the defence of her palaces.
> For see! a concert of kings
> Passed over the frontiers together.
> But one glance, and they were astounded;
> They hastened away in dismay.
> Trembling took hold of them there,
> Like the pangs of a woman in travail.
> They were shattered, as east wind shatters
> The giant ships in pieces. (vv. 3–7.)

This is the more common point of view, and finds frequent expression in such passages as:

> For Jahveh doth delight in His people,
> Adorning the humble with victory. (cxlix. 4.)

In all this there is no trace of anything that can be called eschatology; the triumph of Israel is in no way connected with the enthronement of Jahveh. But in some of the Psalms we find ourselves in a different world. There is, for instance, a great theophany in Ps. xviii., and a signal victory is won, though the instruments are physical weapons and human hands:

> The shield of Thy help Thou gavest me,
> And didst cover me with Thy buckler.
> In Thy strength I took giant strides,
> And mine ankles never tottered.

So I chased the foe till I caught them,
And turned not, till I made an end of them.
I smashed them—they could not rise,
They fell beneath my feet. (vv. 35–38.)

And again:

From the strife of the peoples Thou savedst me,
Thou madest me head of the nations,
Peoples I knew not did serve me. (v. 43.)

This is not a common victory. It has two features which are characteristic of eschatology; one is that the battle is won through the power of Jahveh, who has appeared in all His splendour; the other is that Israel is thus raised to the headship of nations, and becomes the great imperial ruler of mankind. This is certainly not exact history; it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, whatever basis it may find in some event in the past, it does still more forecast a great event in the future. In Ps. xlvii. the whole world is summoned to exult in the triumph of Jahveh:

For Jahveh is most high and dread,
A great King over all the earth.
He subdueth the peoples under us,
The nations under our feet. (vv. 2, 3.)

Then comes His enthronement:

God is gone up with a shout,
Jahveh with the sound of a trumpet. (v. 5.)
God is King over all the nations,
God sits on His holy throne. (v. 8.)

It remains uncertain whether the ascent is to the sanctuary in Zion or into the celestial Temple, but on either interpretation the eschatological flavour is unmistakable.

There is no such ambiguity in Ps. lxxvi., where Jahveh's throne is clearly established in Zion, and it is from Jerusalem that He works His apocalyptic miracles of victory:

There He shivered the lightning arrows,
Shield, sword and equipment of war. (v. 3.)

Characteristic of the true eschatological spirit is the widespread destruction, which yet leaves behind a limited number of survivors who recognise and applaud the power of Jahveh:

> All nations of men shall praise Thee,
> To Thee shall the remnant hold festival. (v. 10.)

And in this Psalm we are free to conjecture that men take no part in the fighting that leads to the victory:

> Spoiled were the stout of heart;
> In the sleep into which they had fallen,
> Not one of the men of valour
> But lost the power of his hands.
> At Thy rebuke, God of Jacob,
> Sank chariot and horse to sleep. (vv. 5, 6.)

Perhaps the most familiar reference to Jahveh's conquest is in one of the well-known Psalms of the divine kingdom:

> Sing a new song to Jahveh,
> For He hath done wonders;
> His right hand and His holy arm
> Have won Him the victory. (xcviii. 1.)

It is, as even our Gospels testify, one of the commonplaces of eschatology that, when once the victory has been won, and Jahveh has been established on the universal throne, He will hold a great court of justice, at which all men may have to present themselves and receive justification or condemnation. In its later forms this thought is familiar to us all in the doctrine of the Day of Judgment, which holds so firm a place in the theology, not only of Judaism, but also of Christianity and of Islam. It should be noted that this is far from being a regular feature of the earlier apocalyptic. As Gressmann remarks (*Ursprung*; p. 297), 'It is remarkable how comparatively rare the judgment is in eschatology. The punishment of men at the end of the world is generally accomplished, not by a judgment but by a catastrophe or by a war.' It is the more important that we should notice

how this, which is one of the most prominent elements of the later eschatological thought, appears already in the Psalter. No doubt 'judging' is one of the recognised functions of every king, and therefore the phrase may almost be used as a synonym for sovereignty. It may mean no more than this in such a passage as Ps. xcvi. 10, 13:

> He will judge the peoples with equity. (v. 10.)
> For He cometh,
> He cometh to judge the earth.
> He will judge the world with justice,
> And the nations with faithfulness. (v. 13.)

So also, perhaps, Ps. lxxv. 7:

> But God Himself is the Judge,
> Humbling one and exalting another,

may mean only that Jahveh is to be the great King, who, though He hide Himself for a time, will yet in the end make His power and authority known. But in other places we do seem to catch the reflection of a definite belief in a final judgment which shall follow on the enthronement of Jahveh:

> Gather the nations about Thee,
> And sit on Thy lofty throne,
> As the Lord, the Judge of the peoples.
> Judge me, Jahveh, in mine innocence
> And according to mine integrity. (vii. 7, 8.)

Ps. lxxxii. may be a picture of the Great Assize, though here the criminals are probably the subordinate gods rather than men —but it will be remembered that the later conception of the Day of Judgment might include the arraignment of superhuman beings. And the reference in Ps. i. 5:

> So the wicked shall not rise up in the judgment,
> Nor sinners appear when the righteous are gathered,

can hardly be mistaken. The Psalm is admittedly late, but it helps us to see how the references to the 'judgment' of the

enthroned Jahveh were interpreted and gradually woven into the eschatological scheme.

Looking back over these and other passages, we may once more admit an uncertainty of interpretation. Some facts are beyond dispute. We may not be able to decide whether Mowinckel is right in attributing so many of our Psalms to the enthronement festival of Jahveh, and seeing in them not merely a memorial of things past, but even more a prospect of events still far in the future. It may be that we shall feel that even those passages which seem most clearly to predict the end of the age are susceptible of another interpretation. But from time to time we meet with words, verses, even with whole sections, which seem to carry with them at least the atmosphere of eschatology. In the later literature this is unmistakable, and though it may be that the forms of expression to which our attention is thus called are no more than the material from which the eschatologists derive their characteristic language, and even perhaps some of their ideas, yet on the other hand it behoves us to remember that we have certain evidence of a belief older than the eighth century prophets, which we can only call eschatology. Two alternatives are open to us. Either we can regard these passages as the expression of a permanent and continuous reign of Jahveh, which is used by the eschatologists as the raw material out of which they fashioned their great picture of the End, or we can think of them as the veiled—sometimes but thinly veiled—reflection of a rather crude, popular, but ancient view of the ultimate destiny of the nation and the race, seen in the mirror of minds which rose above their predecessors and contemporaries. We may not unfairly say that on the whole the balance of probability lies on the side of the latter opinion.

The second feature of the later eschatology which we noted was the appearance of a Messiah. This is by no means universal in the apocalyptic vision, and is probably to be traced to an earlier

belief which had a long history parallel to that of eschatology proper, and only merged with it at a comparatively late stage. From the days of Isaiah onwards we have clear evidence of the expectation of an ideal ruler, who is to succeed the reigning king and to give to his people all that they can desire—freedom, safety, material prosperity. Sometimes this includes also the return of the primaeval peace of Eden in the animal world, and, as Gressmann has shewn, this points us back to an ancient Messianic tradition, far older than the Prophets. But in Isaiah, and perhaps much later, there is no connection between the coming King and the end of the age. When He appears, He will simply rule His people as a perfect sovereign; unusual power may be vested in Him, but there is nothing cataclysmic, no general subversion of the existing order, either in nature or in politics.

Several of the Psalms make mention of a human king or of a *mashî^{a}ch* (who may be either priest or king), yet it is clear that these phrases cannot necessarily be assumed to have an eschatological reference. Thus in the historical Psalm cv., even Abraham is called *mashî^{a}ch* (v. 15). In other Psalms the reference seems to be to an ordinary king who is actually on the throne. Indeed, there is a tendency in some quarters to-day to regard all the allusions to kings and Messiahs as dealing either with some reigning monarch or with some future king who is to be abnormally powerful and abnormally good, but who, nevertheless, will be simply an earthly prince, having no connection with the great manifestation of Jahveh at the End. Sometimes it is by no means certain that an individual king is in view. Thus, when it is said

> Jahveh is the strength of His people,
> The fortress who saves His anointed, (xxviii. 8.)

the parallelism suggests the possibility that the Anointed, the *mashî^{a}ch*, here is the whole of the faithful nation, and though the rest of the Psalm carries a distinctly personal tone, yet it is

possible that this is one of the Psalms in which the poet speaks in the name of the whole community. Again, Ps. lxxxiv. utters a plea for the attention and company of God:

> Behold, O God, our defender,
> And look upon Thine anointed, (v. 9.)

but the speaker is a pilgrim who looks with longing on the Temple, and with envy on those who live always in close proximity to the sanctuary. He is thus more likely to have been a priest whose home was in some more or less distant spot than a king who could at least make his home near Zion.

Other Psalms exhibit features which are more closely allied to normal eschatology. Thus, Ps. xviii. is a song of triumph placed in the mouth of a King who has won, not merely victory, but also dominion, through a great theophany:

> From the strife of the peoples Thou savedst me,
> Thou madest me head of the nations,
> Peoples I knew not did serve me.
> On the instant they hear, they obey me,
> Aliens come to me cringing.
> Aliens wither away,
> And come out of their fastnesses quaking; (vv. 43–45.)

and the Psalmist concludes:

> For great triumphs He grants to His king,
> And leal love He shews His anointed,
> Even David and his seed evermore. (v. 50.)

Here we have at least one feature which is characteristic of the Messianic hope, whether it be early or late, and that is the Davidic ancestry of the Messiah. Whilst, then, we may prefer to assume that the monarch into whose mouth the words are put is an actual historical king of the House of David, yet we must not exclude the possibility that the whole is Messianic in the strict sense, and that the Psalm is thrown forward into the experience of the Messianic king. In favour of this view is the

tone of the whole Psalm, which certainly contemplates Jahveh using methods which, to say the least, are abnormal—as we have seen, one of the marks of true eschatology. But we cannot often find even such support as this. Thus:

> Now I am sure that Jahveh
> Will give victory to His anointed.
> From His Temple in heaven He will answer,
> By His mighty triumphant right hand, (xx. 6.)

is simply a part of a prayer such as might be uttered by any king on the eve of battle, as the rest of the Psalm shews.

One or two of the Psalms are clearly and definitely prayers offered on behalf of a king. Such is Ps. lxxii., which pleads for all kinds of blessings—that the king may live as long as the sun, that the prosperity of his reign may endure as long as the moon, that he may conquer enemies afar and receive the tribute of distant princes, that he may ever afford justice to the lowly, that he may have countless wealth in gold and in the fruits of the earth. On the strength of a single couplet:

> May he come like the rain on the meadow,
> Like showers that besprinkle the earth. (v. 6.)

Duhm[1] would class this Psalm as genuinely Messianic, arguing, with reference to Hos. vi. 3, that such a phrase can only be used either of Jahveh Himself or of His Messianic vice-gerent. But many of us will feel that, in view of the extent to which this Psalm (like others) exhibits the hyperbole of the oriental court, it would be highly precarious to insist on a Messianic reference here. Ps. cx., too, accepted as Messianic in early Christian circles, speaks of a priest-king for whom Jahveh Himself wages war till all His enemies bow beneath His feet. But so early a commentator as Theodore of Mopsuestia suggested that the hero of the poem was no other than Simon Maccabaeus, and though the identification has been disputed, and is by no means generally accepted, it cannot be wholly ignored.

[1] *ad loc.*

At first sight, one of the clearest of Messianic Psalms seems to be the eighty-ninth. It begins with the ancient promise made to David, and continues with a sketch of the majesty of Jahveh as manifested in His conquest of the primaeval Chaos. The poet thence passes to a more detailed account of the promises made to the Anointed, who is the main theme of his hymn, and we have an assurance of the enduring power of the house of David. This, together with the reference to the Hebrew creation-myth (which, as we have seen, is naturally paralleled by an eschatology), might lead us to interpret the whole Psalm in a genuinely eschatological sense. But suddenly the tone changes as the poem nears its close:

> But Thou hast cast off in contempt,
> And been furious with Thine anointed.
> Thou hast spurned the covenant with Thy servant,
> And his sacred crown dashed to the ground, (vv. 38, 39.)

and we see that the Psalm is a remonstrance, not a celebration of a great triumph.

The promises made to David and the coming of a prince in whom they are to be fulfilled, are the theme of Ps. cxxxii., and here, at least, the picture is not darkened by actual disaster. Zion is the spot that Jahveh has chosen, and of Zion it is said:

> There will I raise up for David
> A dynasty puissant.
> I have set mine Anointed a lamp
> That shall never go out. (v. 17.)

A similar note is struck in Ps. ii., where all the kings of the earth are exhorted to acknowledge the supremacy of the Anointed now hailed as the newly begotten son of Jahveh Himself:

> I will tell of Jahveh's decree.
> He said to me, 'Thou art my son,
> Begotten this day by Me.
> Only ask, and I make thee the heir of the nations,
> And lord of the world to its utmost bounds.

Thou shalt break them with sceptre of iron,
And break them like potter's vessel.' (vv. 7–9.)

Here, if anywhere, we have the genuinely eschatological Messiah. But can we be certain of even this Psalm? May it not be that we have an illustration of the extravagant flattery of the court poet, who, working on Babylonian and perhaps Egyptian models, yet speaking in entire reverence, assigns to his patron king a unique relation to Jahveh? Only the boldest of us would dare to dogmatise.

As with the coming of Jahveh to inaugurate the new time, so with the Messianic hope, we are constrained to admit that if we want absolute certainty we must seek it elsewhere than in the Psalter. Yet again, we may say that we know, not only that eschatological ideas were current in Israel from very early times, but that these ideas were ultimately combined with another series of pictures, those which sketched the coming king who, in Jahveh's place, should bear rule over the reconstructed world. It is possible, perhaps more than merely possible, that we have here rather the raw material from which the fabric of Messianic expectation was finally woven by later hands, but, on the other hand, we cannot altogether close our eyes to the possibility that, in their desire to exalt to the uttermost the monarchs whom they served, the poets brought near to them that glorious future when Jahveh's Anointed should hold sway over a new heaven and a new earth.

We may pass on to consider as a third characteristic of the later eschatology, the future of the individual. In its most complete form the Jewish apocalyptic always contains, and indeed culminates in, the resurrection of the dead and the entry of the righteous into heaven, where they will remain for all eternity, while the wicked are doomed to endless torture in hell. The earlier eschatology, however, had nothing to say of the resurrection, or, indeed, of any kind of life beyond the grave; its highest hope was life on earth, indefinitely prolonged. It is

characteristic of the religion of Israel that it is concerned (until the latest stage) with this world only; Jahveh's authority does not extend beyond the frontiers of death. Men do not, it is true, cease to exist; for annihilation is almost inconceivable to the normal human mind. But the kind of existence which is still left to them is a state in which they are bereft of all that made life on earth worth living. Either in the individual grave or in She'ol, they lie as unsubstantial essences, feeble and joyless, yet enduring without prospect of an end. Some think that they can be reached even there, and till late in the history of the people there lingered a belief in necromancy, which necessarily depends on the capacity of the dead to know and to foretell the fortunes of the living. But the official religion, which strictly repressed necromancy as an illicit cult, kept the dead rigorously confined to She'ol, where they could hold communion with neither man nor God.

This is one of the commonest themes in the Psalter. A fair proportion of the Psalms are songs of thanksgiving for rescue from death, whose terror always overshadows the Hebrew mind. Typical are lines like these:

> Thou hast brought me up, Jahveh, from the world below,
> From my way to the pit back to life hast Thou called me.
> (xxx. 3.)
>
> Then to Thee, O Jahveh, I cried,
> To the Lord I made supplication.
> 'What profit is there in my blood,
> If I go down to the pit?
> Canst Thou be praised by the dust?
> Can it tell of Thy faithfulness? (xxx. 8, 9.)
> The dead cannot praise Jahveh,
> Nor those that go down into silence. (cxv. 17.)

The bitterest curse that the pious Israelite can pronounce on his enemies is:

> Let the wicked depart to the world below,
> All the nations that live forgetful of God. (ix. 17.)

She'ol may be depicted as a fearful and savage monster, who seeks to devour any whom she can get into her power; it is only Jahveh who can save man from her maw:

> For Thou wilt not give me up to She'ol
> Nor let any who loves Thee behold the pit. (xvi. 10.)

Further illustration is unnecessary; suffice it to remark that this is the normal attitude of the Psalmists, and expresses their common belief.

But at times we have glimpses of another feeling. So great and so powerful is Jahveh that His authority will extend even to She'ol:

> Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?
> Or whither shall I flee from Thy face?
> If I climb up to heaven, Thou art there:
> Or make She'ol my bed, Thou art there. (cxxxix. 7, 8.)

The same thought had been adumbrated by Amos. Another, however, feeling that this is not the true religious attitude, finds refuge from the moral problems of the universe in the thought that whilst all alike, good and bad, must go down to She'ol, yet for him this is not the end; he will be drawn thence by the hand of the God whom he has so faithfully served.

> For God will assuredly ransom my life
> From the hand of She'ol;
> For He will receive me. (xlix. 15.)

Though dealing with the same problem, the writer of Ps. lxxiii. was of a different spiritual mould. He, too, like Habakkuk and the poet of the Book of Job, has felt the fearful pressure of the problem offered by the presence of suffering in the world. It is not merely that all suffer, but that pain is unevenly distributed, and especially that those who batten on the agony of others, heartlessly and selfishly pursuing their own ruthless ends, yet reach the full term of life in prosperity and safety. Pride, oppression, injustice and violence mark their course; they seem,

as it were, to fling a challenge in the face of omnipotent righteousness. Yet God says no word; the divine lightnings pass them by, and heaven-sent calamity leaves them untouched.

The problem is not new, and the Psalmist has little or nothing to add to what others have said. The interest of the Psalm lies in the insight it affords us into his own personal experience under the stress of his difficulties. His first temptation is to surrender to the evil that is about him, and to abandon the cause he has so long maintained. Goodness, it seems, is futile.

> In vain have I kept my heart pure,
> And washed my hands in innocence. (v. 13.)

But this, he realises, is to play the traitor, not only to God, but to the company of pious souls who fight with him, and share his doubt and his faith:

> Resolving to speak like this
> Were treachery unto Thy children. (v. 15.)

At all costs he must play the man, and help to maintain a front unbroken to the foe.

Then he calls to his aid the consolations of religion, and, falling back on traditional theology—a theology which, as the Book of Job shews, only maintains itself by persistent disregard of facts—he contemplates the disasters which, sooner or later, will befall the wicked. But suddenly, even as he lets himself gloat over the calamities which await them, he becomes conscious of a deadly peril. He finds that his heart is embittered, his very soul is soured, and that there is something that gnaws at his spiritual vitals (v. 21). Back he turns to God, and finds, if not a solution for his problem, yet a peace for his soul, in his consciousness of the fellowship of God:

> As for me, I am with Thee alway;
> Thou hast hold of my right hand.
> By a plan of Thine Thou guidest me,
> And wilt afterwards take me to glory.

Whom have I in the heavens but Thee ?
And on earth there is none I desire beside Thee.
Though flesh and heart waste away,
Yet God is my portion for ever. (vv. 23–26.)

Here is a love, a friendship, a union of spirit that death itself is powerless to sever, and in the assurance of this, the highest blessedness that the human heart can know, all problems and questionings vanish, and he enters into an eternal peace that passeth understanding.

Let us attempt to sum up the result of our short study. One fact is obvious; none of our Psalms is primarily intended to be a complete account of the apocalyptic views of its writer; we have no eschatological treatise which might match such historical Psalms as civ., cv. But we have in the Psalter a certain amount of the kind of material which the later apocalypse used so freely, and, at the same time, we have some reason to conjecture that the popular thought of Israel was never wholly without an eschatology. Further, the tone of many of the Psalms shews that they were born in the circumstances best calculated to turn men's thoughts to a hope that Jahveh might suddenly and violently end the age, and, through returning chaos, bring a new world into being. Yet it is surprising how little we have that we can with certainty call genuine eschatology. At times we seem to catch a hint of an undefined sense of the loom of a great and catastrophic change, but for the most part our Psalmists look forward to the glory for which they pray, and which they sometimes confidently predict, as one which will come through means more or less natural and familiar. Even when imagination is most free, the picture that it draws rarely includes that catastrophic upheaval which alone can properly be called eschatology. What we have is, for the most part, as we have already seen, the raw material out of which an eschatology can be reconstructed.

Yet, very occasionally, a Psalmist carries us further. In

Ps. lxxvi., and possibly elsewhere, whilst the poet tries, or so it seems, to limit himself to the ordinary language of Temple worship, the theme is essentially eschatological, and once or twice—as in Ps. i.—it is clear that an apocalyptic Day of Judgment for all nations is present to the writer's mind. There are, further, more than hints of a Davidic king of the future, which merge in such pieces as Ps. ii. into a figure not dissimilar from that of the later Messiah. Any attempt to date our Psalms, or even to arrange them in chronological order, must be extremely precarious, but it does seem that in the progress of thought (not always to be identified with the progress of time) we are in an atmosphere of transition, and sometimes feel ourselves to be standing on the verge of a wholly new order of religious thought. Finally, whilst that most characteristic and, indeed, most permanent fruit of Jewish eschatology, the belief in a nobler destiny for the individual beyond the grave, is one of the rarest thoughts in our Psalter, we have more than a suggestion of it in Ps. xlix. And in Ps. lxxiii. we have a unique expression of the inner experiences of a saint and a hero of faith who has in large measure anticipated the deepest thought of the New Testament itself on the life after death. For he has realised that when once the true bond of mutual affection has linked the human soul to God, a relation has been established which no material accident like death can possibly disturb. He who dwells in God has of necessity won a life as enduring as God Himself; he who *knows* God, has attained to a certainty and a rest which transcend all the doubts and questionings of the human intellect. He too might pray, 'This is life eternal, to know *Thee*.'

T. H. Robinson.

VI

THE PSALMS IN THE LIGHT OF BABYLONIAN RESEARCH

One of the most noteworthy tendencies of recent research is the endeavour to find a common source for early culture, from which it need hardly be said that the Hebrew Scriptures have not been exempt. I have indeed much sympathy with this attempt; but, when it is forced to mean that many of the most important elements of Hebrew culture were borrowed from, not that they shared a common origin with, Babylonian civilisation, it is an entirely different question. It is the purpose, then, of my lecture to examine this theory as applied to the Hebrew Psalter, for much of which a Babylonian origin has been confidently claimed since the discovery of a considerable number of Babylonian hymns and psalms, which often exhibit striking resemblances with the Hebrew psalms. The chief exponent of this pan-Babylonian or, as its advocates prefer to call it, pan-Oriental theory was Winckler, who claimed to have discovered the secret which explains every phenomenon of Babylonian mythology and Hebrew legend. The key to the problem is the belief that there existed in Babylonia long before the historical period a view of the universe based upon astral theory. Not only are heaven and earth parts of one harmonious system and the image or reflection of each other, but also all the beliefs of the ancient world concerning gods and religion are explained, and the true understanding of narratives, which on

the face of them seem to be purely historical, is furnished by it. Thus Abraham and Lot, or Saul and David, who must always keep together and can never agree, are a pair of Διόσκουροι or Heavenly Twins! It is now well known that the birth, life and death of Marduk and Christ have been traced to a common mythical source, and the origin of the bread and wine of the Christian Mass has been found in the 'food of life' and 'water of life' of which a tablet from Tall-ul-'Amarnâ containing the legend of Adapa speaks!

It is, however, now well known that the Biblical stories of the creation have much in common with, and must owe some of their content to, the similar Babylonian legends. If, therefore, the Hebrews, like their Babylonian neighbours, had psalms of prayer like Psalm lxxx.,[1] of penitence like Psalm li.,[2] processional psalms like Psalms xxiv. 7–10 and cxviii.,[3] psalms of worship to accompany the offering of sacrifice like Psalm lxvi.,[4] psalms on behalf of the king like Psalms xx. and xxi.,[5] and so on, what can be the explanation but that the Hebrews borrowed their ideas and their materials from the Babylonians, presumably during the Exile? From this, therefore, it is inferred that all Psalms shewing Babylonian influence are exilic or post-exilic. The term 'Babylonian influence' is, moreover, very freely interpreted. It covers not only any general similarity, however vague, in the type or composition of individual psalms, but also community of religious ideas and doctrines, common idioms and expressions, whether in the technical phraseology of religion or poetry or in the ordinary language of daily life, down to the merest verbal resemblances. Two examples of the unfair

[1] Cf. Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, vol. i. p. 492, ll. 1–28.

[2] Cf. Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, Nos. i.–ix.

[3] Cf. Zimmern in *Der Alte Orient*, vii. 3, p. 9.

[4] Cf. Zimmern, *ibid.* vii. 3, p. 11; xiii. 1, pp. 5 ff.

[5] Cf. Jastrow, *ibid.* vol. i, pp. 533-534.

length to which the last class may be pushed will suffice. In the well-known verse:

> I will tell concerning the decree:
> Jahveh said unto me, 'Thou art my son;
> I have this day begotten thee,'[1]

has been seen an echo of the law of adoption in the Code of Khammurabi, whereby a man may acknowledge sons born to him by a handmaid with the words:

> (They are) my sons.[2]

Again, with the verse:

> The sea saw it, and fled back;
> Jordan turned backward,[3]

have been compared the words in a Babylonian hymn in honour of the word of Marduk:

> It cometh over the sea and the sea is shaken,
> It cometh over the reed-beds and the reed-beds tremble,
> It cometh over the stream of the Euphrates,
> And the word of Marduk stirreth the deeps,[4]

where the only resemblance is that the sea and the rivers took notice of the works of God; but it is forgotten that the Psalmist is referring to the events at the Red Sea during the Exodus [5] and the entrance into the Promised Land,[6] so that the comparison is utterly false.

Works of art are also called in to aid in the destruction of Hebrew originality. Thus, carvings have been found representing Shamash the sun-god sitting in a tent placed over the waters of the sea [7] and compared with the words of the Psalmist:

> In them hath He set a tent for the sun.[8]

[1] Psalm ii. 7. [2] Johns, *The Oldest Code of Laws*, pp. 34-35, §170.
[3] Psalm cxiv. 3.
[4] Hehn in *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, vol. v. pt. iii. pp. 332-333, No. 6, ll. 5–12. [5] Exodus, xv.8. [6] Joshua, iii. 9 17.
[7] Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilde*, vol. ii. p. 57, No. 92.
[8] Psalm xix. 4.

Again, various seals depicting two streams issuing from the shoulders of a god or from a basin in his hand [1] are cited in illustration of the verse describing

A river whose arms make glad the city of god.[2]

On another old Babylonian seal are shewn worshippers standing in front of a goddess holding in her hand a cup,[3] which recalls to the pan-Babylonist the verse:

In the hand of Jahveh there is a cup, and the wine foameth;
It is full of mixture, and He poureth out of the same.[4]

But what are these comparisons? Do not all peoples provide their deities with dwellings like those of man? Are not branching rivers and cups of foaming wine obvious figures of plenty and abundance?

Such forced comparisons naturally lead to false conclusions. Thus it has recently been argued that, since many of the Babylonian psalms are prayers to a god for deliverance from some spell which an enemy has cast on the sufferer and which neither priest nor exorcist can cure, those psalms in the Hebrew Psalter which appear to proceed from a sick-bed and to be prayers for restoration to health are also in fact directed against witchcraft. Thus the 'workers of mischief,' 'evil-doers' and 'the wicked' are in such psalms to be taken as sorcerers; even Psalm li. is converted into an anti-magical prayer, directed against an enemy who seeks to procure his victim's death by magical means.[5] While re-introducing the old and more probable view that the 'I' of these Psalms is not the congregation of Israel but an indi-

[1] Delaporte, *Catalogue des Cylindres Orientaux*, viii. 47.

[2] Psalm xlvi. 4.

[3] Jastrow, *Bildermappe zur Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, 28, 86.

[4] Psalm lxxv. 8.

[5] Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien*, vol. i. pp. 1-133, who includes Psalms vi. xiv. xxvi. xxviii. xxxi. xxxv. xxxviii. xli.-xliii. li. liv. lxiii. and cxx.

vidual, the author of this interpretation goes beyond what is probable; for, in the first place, comparison does not constitute proof, and, secondly, such a theory is intrinsically highly improbable in view of the Jewish attitude towards sorcerers and witches. Another idea based on Babylonian parallels is that the so-called Psalms of Accession, in which Jahveh is acclaimed with the cry

Jahveh reigneth over the nations [1]

(or rather 'Jahveh is become king'), were sung at one of the annual feasts, and that that feast was kept as Jahveh's day of accession. In the Psalter, it is held, the accession of Jahveh is naturally described after the analogy of the accession of an Israelite king; for 'it appears as if the king's accession was kept as an annual festival—and that in the autumn—so that it coincided in time with the harvest-festival. The analogy of Babylonian custom supports this view; each New Year's Day the Babylonian king "took the hands of Bêl."' [2] Another curious point of contact is that, as the Babylonian 'Epic of Creation' was recited on New Year's Day,[3] so one of the Hebrew 'Psalms of Accession' celebrate Jahveh's creation of the world:

The sea is His, and He made it;
And His hands formed the dry land.[4]

The Babylonian is indeed an interesting parallel, but this theory of a feast to celebrate Jahveh's accession needs to be

[1] Psalm xlvii. 8; cf. Psalms xciii. and xcv.–xcix., to which Mowinckel adds Psalm c.

[2] Mowinckel, *op. cit.* vol. ii. pp. 1-209. It may, however, be doubted whether the Babylonian *Marduk-ma sharru* (pp. 41-46) does not mean 'Marduk is king,' rather than 'Marduk has become king;' if this is so, the idea of an accession is greatly weakened.

[3] Langdon, *The Epic of Creation*, pp. 20-21. [4] Psalm xcv. 5.

proved up to the hilt from the Hebrew side before it can be accepted by Biblical scholars; for comparison with Babylonian practice cannot establish a Hebrew custom.

Before, however, we can estimate the influence of Babylonian diction and thought on the work of the Hebrew Psalmists, it is necessary to recall to our minds and to classify the various types of influence which have been detected in the Psalms. We shall then be in a position to ask ourselves several questions: how far are the resemblances between the Babylonian and the Hebrew hymns and psalms purely superficial matters of expression or the reflection of a real unity of idea underlying the inmost consciousness of both nations? and, how far are they to be regarded as the result of direct or indirect borrowing from Babylon on the part of the Hebrew thinkers or as the heritage of a common ancestry from the primitive Semites?

The first resemblance that strikes the reader of these national poetries lies in the form: parallelism is one of the two principles which govern the composition both of Babylonian and of Hebrew verse. Hebrew parallelism is more richly developed, but the elements of several kinds can be found in Babylonian. Of the four kinds of parallelism—synonymous, antithetic, synthetic or constructive, and climactic—the first, as being the simplest, is the most frequent in Babylonian, as in Hebrew. A simple example of it in Babylonian is this:

> I cried unto my god, but he shewed me not his face;
> I implored my goddess, but her head is not lifted up,[1]

where the parallelism is like that in the verse:

> Hide not Thy face from me,
> Turn not Thy servant aside in anger.[2]

Notice here that the same idiom 'to hide the face' is used of the deity in both languages. Notice too that Babylonian can

[1] Langdon, *Babylonian Wisdom*, p. 37, ll. 4-5. [2] Psalm xxvii. 9.

make a more varied use of synonymous parallelism through the power to invoke different deities in parallel clauses.

Antithetic and synthetic parallelism are far rarer in Babylonian, and do not occur nearly so often in the hymns proper as in the epic poems. In the former the thoughts in the two lines are contrasted as in the verse:

> Jahveh recovereth the humble;
> He abaseth the wicked to the ground.[1]

The same principle of composition underlies such lines as:

> Shamash honours the head of the upright ;
> Shamash also lashes the wicked with a whip.[2]

In the latter, which is also called constructive parallelism, the second line neither repeats nor is contrasted with the first line, but supplements or completes it; a good example is found in the verse:

> In Thee did our fathers trust;
> They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.[3]

In Babylonian this type is exemplified in another poem in such a couplet as :

> By Thy glance Thou shewest them favour;
> Thou lettest them see light, so that they understand Thy might.[4]

The fourth kind of parallelism, sometimes called 'ascending rhythm,' like that seen in the couplet:

> Ascribe unto Jahveh, O ye sons of gods,
> Ascribe unto Jahveh glory and strength,[5]

where the first line is incomplete and the second takes up some

[1] Psalm cxlvii. 6.

[2] Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, vol. i. p. 427.

[3] Psalm xxii. 4.

[4] Zimmern in *Der Alte Orient*, vii. 3, p. 10.

[5] Psalm xxix, 1.

words from it and completes it, occurs but rarely in Babylonian; yet a trace of it may be found in such a couplet as:

O almighty mistress of mankind,
Merciful one, to whom it is good to turn, accept my sighing.[1]

These examples will suffice to shew that the main types of parallelism are common to both Babylonian and Hebrew poetry; it will not therefore be necessary to go into further detail and cite instances of the less usual types and variations which occur in both languages.

The second principle, that of rhythm, upon which Hebrew verse is based, finds a place also in Babylonian, though it is there less marked and has not yet received the attention which it deserves; nor is there much scope for it in Babylonian psalms, which are to a great extent literal translations of Sumerian originals. Yet on some tablets the Babylonian scribes have divided the lines into two strophes, just as the later Hebrew scholars divided them, doubtless following ancient tradition, into two halves by means of the accents. Owing to the technical nature of ancient Semitic rhythm and the difficulty of representing it in another language, I shall content myself with drawing attention only to the commonest rhythm, in which there are four beats in a line or two in each half line. A good example is found in the opening words of the 'Epic of Creation':

When the heavens on high | had not been named
And the earth beneath | bore no name;[2]

the rhythm, it will be seen, is here the same as that in the words of the Psalmist:

Nations were in tumult, | kingdoms were moved:
He uttered his voice: | the earth was melted.[3]

[1] Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, i. 9-12.

[2] Langdon, *The Epic of Creation*, i. 1–2. [3] Psalm xlvi. 6.

But there is as much freedom in Babylonian as in Hebrew; for, just as a line of four beats may be followed by one of three in the verse:

> Jáhveh is kíng | for éver and éver;
> The nátions are perished out of His land[1]

—a variation, it may be mentioned, which some scholars disallow or deny—so in the Babylonian epic we find the rhythm of four beats in the first two lines followed by one of three varied with others of four beats:

> Apsû, the primaéval their síre,
> Múmmu and Tiámat | that báre them áll,
> Míngled their wáters togéther.[2]

We can, therefore, no more lay down rules for rhythm and rhythmical variation in Babylonian than in Hebrew. Yet enough has been said to prove the substantial identity of their principles of prosody. But does this mean that, as the Romans borrowed their metres—hexameter, elegaic, alcaic, sapphic, or whatever it may be—from Greece, so the Hebrews borrowed their rhythmical principles from the Babylonians? The answer must be an emphatic negative. There is evidence for a native Italian metre, and there are also indications that the artificial metrical system of the Greeks was but imperfectly suited to the genius of the Latin language. There is, on the contrary, no evidence for an earlier and distinct system of versification in Hebrew. Further—and this is the important point—rhythm is a far simpler instrument of versification than metre, and there are few, if any, languages which are not adapted to some form of rhythmical verse, however crude; and, in the case of languages so alike as Babylonian and Hebrew, which resemble each other far more closely than Greek and Latin, it is natural that a closely similar type of rhythmical prosody

[1] Psalm x. 16. [2] Langdon, *ibid.* i. 3–5.

should have been evolved, more especially as these two races were not only linguistically but racially and culturally closely connected through a common origin, perhaps not so very far back in time. It is hardly possible that Babylonian influence, by the legacy which the Babylonian culture of the period of the letters found at Tall-ul-'Amarnâ left to the succeeding occupants of Palestine, or later by more direct contact through trade and commerce, may have to any extent affected Hebrew verse. For the age when Sargon made all the West to speak one tongue was followed by a period of confusion unfavourable to the transmission of cultural influences, while the trader is hardly likely to have brought much culture across several hundred miles of desert in the intervals of constant wars. Why too should the invention of what even the least cultured savage has in a rudimentary form discovered not be allowed to so an advanced race as the Hebrews ?

It may perhaps be added that both races shared several literary devices in common; such are the insertion of a refrain after every few lines or verses, the ordering of a verse or couplet chiastically and the acrostic and chain-wise arrangement of a poem. The best known example of a refrain is seen in the verse :

> Why art thou cast down, O my soul,
> And why moanest thou upon me ?
> Hope thou in God; for I shall yet thank Him,
> (Which is) the salvation of my countenance,[1]

which runs through Psalms xlii. and xliii. In a Babylonian hymn to Nergal the principle is somewhat different; there the first line recounts the praise of the god and the second repeats it in a brief form, using the same epithet:

> Lord of the great gods, with fire and splendour [clothed],
> Nergal is lord.

[1] Psalms xlii. 5 and 11 ; xliii. 5.

Powerful among the Anunnaki, with mighty splendour [filled],
Nergal is mighty,[1]

and so on. A simple example of chiasmus is found in the verse:

'Seek ye My face';
Thy face, Jahveh, will I seek,[2]

which is of the same type as the line:

Thy neck turn Thou round and accept his lament.[3]

An example of a rarer form of composition, whereby the end of the preceding line or verse is repeated in or caught up by the beginning of the following line or verse, is seen in the Hebrew Psalter in the verses:

Never may He suffer thy foot to be moved!
Never may He slumber that keepeth thee!
Behold, He that keepeth Israel
Doth neither slumber nor sleep;[4]

this appears also in one of the Babylonian myths of creation:

When the heaven-god [created the heavens],
The heavens created the earth,
The earth created the rivers,
The rivers created the ditches,
The ditches created the mud,
The mud created the worm.[5]

Unlike those forms just described, acrostic composition in Babylonian and Hebrew followed somewhat different lines of development. In the former the complicated syllabary did not permit a strictly alphabetic arrangement, but was based on the principle of beginning each line of every stanza with one letter of the god to whom the hymn was dedicated; thus in every stanza of one in honour of Nabû the first line begins with

[1] Jastrow, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 469, ll. 5–8 (cf. pp. 469-470, ll. 1–32).
[2] Psalm xxvii. 8. [3] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iii. 19.
[4] Psalm cxxi. 3–4; cf. vv. 1–2.
[5] Gressmann, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 28.

N, the second with B and the third with U.[1] In the latter, on the contrary, each verse or group of verses in the acrostic psalms begins with the next letter of the alphabet, as in Psalms xxv. and cxix.

Such devices are purely artificial and often late, and it is now quite impossible to decide whether in any given instance they are of native or foreign origin; but the fact that each nation invented a different type of acrostic composition tells in this case against borrowing on either side, and makes it therefore not improbable that the other forms of composition just described were also independently discovered. The fact, also, that these principles were known to other literary peoples, like the Greeks, points in the same direction; for why could not the Hebrews of themselves discover what Babylonians and Greeks were able independently to discover?

Before leaving the form of the Psalms, it may be well to call attention to the fact that certain Psalms, both in Hebrew and Babylonian, are composed in a didactic strain, usually associated with the Wisdom-literature. Such a Psalm is that which begins:

> Be not incensed at evil doers;
> Envy not them that work unrighteousness,[2]

and urges the reader to

> Trust in Jahveh and do good,
> Dwell in the land and follow after faithfulness,[3]

and

> Be still towards Jahveh and wait patiently for Him;
> Be not incensed at Him that prospereth in his way,[4]

and again

> Desist from anger and forsake wrath,[5]

[1] Jastrow, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 510-511. [2] Psalm xxxvii. 1.
[3] *Ibid.* 3. [4] *Ibid.* 7. [5] *Ibid.* 8.

and so on. The whole tenor of this Psalm is very like that of the following Babylonian psalm:

> Slander not (but) speak kindly,
> Utter no evil (but) say what is good;
> Whoever slanders, speaking evil,
> Shamash will wait for him to exact vengeance.[1]

Here the precise penalty is lost, but was doubtless not unlike that anticipated by the Hebrew Psalmist:

> For they shall soon be mown down like the grass,
> And fade like the green of young grass.[2]

The Babylonian poet continues in the same strain:

> Open not thy mouth wide, guard thy lips;
> Utter not rashly the thoughts of thine heart,[3]

and later:

> Daily worship thy god,
> With sacrifice and address meet for offerings of incense;
> For that is what beseemeth a god.
> Prayer, supplication, and meek submission
> Shalt thou offer him every morning;
> Then shalt thou get thee fulness of riches,
> And thou wilt find with god's help abundant prosperity.[4]

Enough, I think, has been quoted to shew the didactic nature of these Psalms and to prove that both Hebrews and Babylonians were acquainted with this type of composition. But so were many other races, such as the Egyptians and the Greeks. No more, therefore, can this type of composition, than the acrostic principle and chiasmus, be held to constitute a proof of Babylonian influence on the Hebrew Psalter. Not only is this the case, but not even the arrangement of his subject-matter shews any sign of the dependence of the Hebrew on the Babylonian poet; for

[1] Langdon, *Babylonian Wisdom*, p. 91, § M, ll. 1–4.

[2] Psalm xxxvii. 2 or 1 in Parallel Psalter.

[3] Langdon, *op. cit.* p. 91, § N, ll. 1-2.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 92, § O, ll. 1–7.

no clear underlying principle of arrangement has been found in either case. Even indeed when Psalms civ. and the Egyptian hymn of Amenophis IV handle the same themes—the creation of the world, the blessing of the water, night, day, the maintenance of life—they surely prove their independence by following a different order, although the theme appears to be one where the natural order would be adopted by both writers;[1] nor can it be forgotten that such a subject is likely to have, and indeed has, occurred independently to poets all over the world. If interdependence under such circumstances cannot be established, how much less probable is it in the case of Babylonian and Hebrew poets, whose coincidences often hardly extend beyond a word or phrase, or at most a single idea!

From the form it is now time to turn to the contents of the Psalter, and it will in this case be convenient to begin with the phraseology. The attentive reader, if he is able to read the Babylonian and Hebrew psalms in their original languages, will immediately remark a number of verbal similarities. Thus the well-known conception of Jahveh as the shepherd of His people recalls a similar Babylonian idea: both peoples called their gods and their kings 'shepherds,' using words philologically identical, the Babylonian *rê'û* and the Hebrew *rō'eh*. So closely related are the two languages that Babylonian can often be used to interpret obscure Hebrew words. The curious word '*shiggāyôn* of David' in the heading of one of the Psalms[2] was regarded by the older scholars as an error and duly emended away; yet it now appears to have been more or less correctly translated ψαλμός by the Septuagint, for the removal of the Hebrew termination *-ôn* reveals its identity with the Assyrian *shegû* 'elegy.'[3] In other cases Babylonian enables us to

[1] Jirku, *Altorientalischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament*, p. 229.

[2] Psalm vii. i. (R.V.).

[3] Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 1, n. 2; Langdon in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1920, p. 175; G. R. Driver in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. xxiii. p. 409.

correct the traditional interpretation of the Hebrew text. For instance, there is no true parallelism between 'heart' and 'glory' in such lines as

> My heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth;
> My flesh also dwelleth in safety;[1]

the interpretation of 'my glory' as 'my soul' does not remove the difficulty. Now in Babylonian poetry the liver is often regarded as an organ of emotion, being used especially for the heart or the temper. The Babylonian word *kabittu*, 'liver,' is cognate with the Hebrew *kābhēdh*, 'liver,' and there is little doubt but that this should be restored in the Hebrew text for *kābhôdh*, 'glory,' in this and similar passages. The verse will then run:

> My heart is glad and my liver rejoiceth,

and should be compared with the Babylonian phrase:

> May thy heart be at ease, may thy liver be appeased![2]

Another term which can be corrected from Babylonian is *'ēl shadday*, (conventionally rendered) 'God Almighty' or (without *'ēl*, 'God') 'the Almighty,' as in the verse:

> He that dwelleth in the hiding-place of the most High.[3]

The word *shadday* cannot be satisfactorily explained from Hebrew; but when it is seen that a Babylonian could address his god as *shadû rabû*, 'great mountain,' or *ilu shadû'a*, 'god my mountain,' it is easy to conjecture that *'ēl shadday* should be vocalised *'ēl shādhay* and translated 'God my mountain.' We may then compare

> Unto Thee, Jahveh, do I cry;
> My rock, keep not silence from me,[4]

[1] Psalm xvi. 9.

[2] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iii., 29 and 30; cf. i., 2 and ii., 24.

[3] Psalm xci. 1; cf. lxviii. 14.

[4] Psalm xxviii. 1.

and many similar passages.[1] Again, in the line

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,[2]

the sudden invocation of God in a Psalm addressed to the king raises a difficulty which can only be evaded, if recourse is not had to textual emendation, by supposing that the king is addressed in hyperbolical language as God. For this there are many parallels in Assyro-Babylonian literature, especially in the letters from Tall-ul-'Amarnâ;[3] but it is difficult to find anything quite like it in the Old Testament. May it not therefore be better translated:

Thy throne is God for ever and ever

(*i.e.* 'thy throne is like God's throne') and be a form of *comparatio compendiaria*? The plausibility of this interpretation is strengthened by the finding of this identical construction in the Babylonian 'Epic of Creation,' where it is said of Marduk:

Thy word is the heaven-god[4]

(*i.e.* 'thy word is like that of the heaven-god').

But I do not wish it to be supposed that such conceptions as the figure of God or the king as the shepherd of his people or of the liver as the seat of one of the emotions or certain peculiar constructions were borrowed from Babylon—far from it; for these are ideas common to many people. I need hardly remind any one of Agamemnon, ποίμενα λαῶν, 'shepherd of peoples,' which no one will regard as a phrase borrowed from Babylon; the use, too, of the various organs of the body as representative of the spirit and the emotions is widespread, though from the Semitic habit of depicting the abstract under

[1] Psalms xviii. 31 and 46; xxxi. 2; lxii. 2 and 7; lxxviii. 35; lxxxix. 26; xcii. 15; xcv. 1.

[2] Psalm xlv. 6. [3] Jirku, *op. cit.* p. 226, on Psalm xlv. 6.

[4] Langdon, *The Epic of Creation*, iv. 4 and 6; cf. G. R. Driver in Peake, *The People and the Book*, pp. 115–116.

concrete forms it is of especial frequency in the Semitic languages. The Aramaean, it is true, said *'ethkabbēdh* 'was liverish,' *sc.* 'angry,' but the English idiom 'was liverish' was not borrowed from it. In the case of the Hebrew and Babylonian psalms such usages go back to the common Semitic ancestry of the two peoples.

Both people shared, it goes without saying, a certain number of idioms and figures of speech, in which often the very words were philologically identical; such is the phrase 'poured out' or 'shed blood like water' (Ass. *damê kîma mê nadi*[1] and Hebr. *shāphakh dāmîm kammayim*[2]). But it is profitable to look at some more striking phrases, taking first those which have no definitely religious associations at all. One such figure is the comparison of a conquered foe to the footstool beneath the conqueror's feet, which occurs in the verse:

> Sit thou at My right hand,
> Until I make thine enemies thy footstool,[3]

and is found several times in the letters found at Tall-ul-'Amarnâ—for example:

> Behold, I am a servant of the king my lord, and the footstool of his feet.[4]

Another common metaphor is that of the trapped bird; thus the line:

> Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the trap of the fowler[5]

may be compared to a passage in another letter from the same correspondence:

> As a bird which lies in the midst of a net am I (situated) at Gebal;[6]

[1] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iv. 47. [2] Psalm lxxix. 3. [3] Psalm cx. 1.
[4] Knudzton, *Die El-Amarnâ-Tafeln*, No. 141, ll. 39–40; cf. No. 84, ll. 3–4.
[5] Psalm cxxiv. 7. [6] Knudzton, *op. cit.* No. 74, ll. 45–6.

So common, indeed, is this figure that not only does it recur half a dozen times more in this correspondence, but is used by Sennacherib in the famous account of the siege of Hezekiah in Jerusalem:

> I shut him up like a caged bird in Jerusalem his capital.[1]

Several figures applied to Jahveh can also be illustrated from Babylonian literature, such as that describing the impossibility of escaping His notice:

> If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there;
> And if I make Shĕ'ōl my couch, behold, Thou art there,[2]

which resembles the Babylonian phrase:

> If we ascend into the heavens, if we descend on to the earth, yet is our head in thine hands[3]

The description, again, of the spreading abroad of the praise of God or king from East to West is also found in the literature of both peoples; as the pious Hebrew sang:

> From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, Jahveh's name is to be praised,[4]

so the loyal Babylonian wrote to his lord the king:

> Behold, my lord the king hath set his name at the rising [5] of the sun and at the going down [5] of the sun. [6]

It should be noticed in passing that the use of 'name' for a person or his reputation is common to all the Semitic languages. It is of such frequent occurrence in both the Babylonian

[1] Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. ii. pp. 94–95, ll. 20-21.

[2] Psalm cxxxix. 8.

[3] Knudzton, *op. cit.* No. 264, ll. 16–18. [4] Psalm cxiii. 3.

[5] The Assyrian roots here used for 'rising' (*aṣû*, 'to go forth') and 'setting' (*erêbu*, 'to enter') are the words from which the names 'Asia' and 'Europe' respectively are derived.

[6] Knudzton, *op. cit.* No. 288, ll. 5–7.

and Hebrew psalms that it hardly needs to be emphasised; but such passages as:

> I will praise Thy name for ever and ever,[1]

and

> I will do homage and praise thy name, O Marduk,[2]

should be compared.

Another figure, 'to stand at the side' of a person in the sense of helping him, is also used by both peoples of God; the Psalmist exclaims:

> The Lord upon Thy right hand
> Shattereth kings in the day of His anger,[3]

while the Babylonian prays:

> May my god march on my right hand,
> May my god march on my left hand,
> May my god who keepeth me march at my side.[4]

It remains to record only two or three other metaphors common to Hebrew and Babylonian psalmists. The one is a figure depicting extreme loneliness:

> Abandon me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
> For my father and my mother have forsaken me,[5]

which should be compared with the similar expression:

> Behold, my father and my mother put me not here,[6]

by which the writer means that the king has put him where he is, far from his home. The other is the well-known comparison of salvation to a light:

> For Thou lightest my lamp:
> Jahveh my God maketh my darkness to be light,[7]

[1] Psalm cxlv. 2.

[2] Ungnad, *Die Religion der Babylonier und Assyrer*, p. 172, No. 5, l. 1.

[3] Psalm cx. 5.

[4] Zimmern in *Der Alte Orient*, vii. 3, p. 16.

[5] Psalm xxviii. 9–10.

[6] Knudzton, *op. cit.* vol. i. No. 286, ll. 9–11.

[7] Psalm xviii. 28.

which recalls the Babylonian couplet:

My dark and smoking brazier is lighted,
My flickering torch is kindled.[1]

Striking, on the contrary, is the difference between the beautiful Hebrew prayer:

Purge me from sin with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,[2]

and the corresponding Babylonian prayer, addressed to Shamash:

Cleanse him like a . . . vessel,
Scour him like a butter-dish;
Like burnished copper make him shine;
Free him from the spell.[3]

It is hard here not to feel that it is but a short step from the sublime to the ridiculous. In conclusion, it need hardly be said that all these figures are drawn from the life of every day, so that there is nothing to prevent their having arisen independently in the minds of many different people.

It was, in the next place, natural that certain expressions or turns of phrase should become stereotyped in relation to certain occurrences, especially to those of a painful nature. Among these are references to the limbs and bones, in such verses as that in which the Psalmist complains:

All my bones are parted asunder;
My heart is become like wax;
It is melted in the midst of my bowels,[4]

which must be compared with the Babylonian poet's figure:

Through distortion (?) my members are undone;
My limbs are wrenched apart (?), they move out of unison (?)[5]

A closer parallel is provided by the metaphor contained in the well-known words:

My tears have been my bread day and night,[6]

[1] Zimmern *ibid.* vii. 3, p. 21. [2] Psalm li. 7.
[3] Jastrow, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 427. [4] Psalm xxii. 14.
[5] Langdon, *Babylonian Wisdom*, p. 47, ll. 39-40.
[6] Psalm xlii. 3; cf. lxxx. 6; cii. 5 and 10.

which immediately recall the Babylonian verse:

Food have I not drunk, weeping was my refreshment;
Water have I not drunk, tears were my drink.[1]

The figure for deep misery which occurs in the words:

My weals stink (and) fester because of my foolishness[2]

is found also in Babylonian in the similar figure:

My blows (?) are grievous, bitter is the wound;
A scourge, full of bruising (?),[3] has been laid upon me.

In Palestine and Babylonia, too, the sick sometimes fancied themselves in their despair already dead; the Hebrew Psalmist says:

I am counted with them that go down into the pit,[4]

and prays to Jahveh for succour; the Babylonian addresses his god as one who brings back him 'whose body has been taken down to Arallû'[5] *viz.* as one who brings back to health those who are sick unto death.[6]

Both alike also sought in their extremity to know the issue of their present plight, but the Hebrew's cry has more hope in it than that of the Babylonian. The Hebrew turns to Jahveh with the prayer:

Jahveh, make me to know mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is;
Let me know how frail I am;[7]

but the Babylonian can utter only the despairing lament:

The exorciser is perplexed about my sickness,
The seer has not understood my symptoms;

[1] Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, ii. 19–22. [2] Psalm xxxviii. 5.
[3] Langdon, *op. cit.* p. 47, ll. 34-35.
[4] Psalm lxxxviii. 4; cp. xxviii. 1, and lxxi. 20.
[5] The Babylonian equivalent of the Hebrew *She'ōl*.
[6] Cf. Jirku, *op. cit.* p. 227, on Psalm lxxi. 20.
[7] Psalm xxxix. 4.

The cleansing priest has not cured the cause of my sickness,
The seer has not told the end of my infirmity.[1]

To what do these parallels amount? Metaphors from the weakness or collapse of the limbs of the body are of so obvious a nature as to prove nothing; they might well have occurred independently to the thinkers of each race. At the same time the tendency of the Semites, which has already been mentioned, to visualise the abstract under concrete forms would create a predisposition in the minds both of Babylonians and Hebrews to utilise such expressions. The figure, again, of eating or drinking one's tears can easily have arisen independently; for did it not also occur to a Roman poet? Few readers will need to be reminded of Ovid's verse,

cura dolorque animi lacrimaeque alimenta fuere.[2]

The same may well be the case of that other figure whereby misfortunes are depicted as festering wounds; for, though I have not found this actual metaphor elsewhere, that of the arrows of God, which earlier in the same Psalm are said to stick fast in a man, occurs several times in the *Odyssey*. Nor is the doctrine that the rays of the moon are dangerous confined to the Babylonians and Hebrews; the very words σεληνιάζεσθαι and *lunatic*, which indeed imply a different blow from that contemplated by those peoples, testify to the wide diffusion of such an idea. The feeling of the sick man that he is sinking into the grave is too natural to lend probability to any idea of borrowing on the part of either Hebrew or Babylonian writer. Who has not himself experienced the same feeling? We conclude then that these resemblances are the outcome of thoughts common to the greater part of mankind, and that here at least the Hebrew Psalmists are not to be regarded as having come under Babylonian influence.

If then this may be said of metaphors and figures of speech

[1] Langdon, *op. cit.* p. 48, ll. 43–46. [2] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, x. 75.

which have ideas based on concrete experiences of the human body underlying them, what is to be our verdict on even more trivial similarities of thought and diction, which are often purely verbal? Thus, much has been made of the fact that the cry 'how long?' with which the Psalmist sometimes opens his prayer, as he has done in his complaint that the nations have defiled into Jahveh's inheritance:

> How long,[1] Jahveh, wilt Thou be angry for ever?
> (How long) shall Thy jealousy burn like fire?[2]

is of frequent occurrence also in Babylonian prayers, often repeated several times, as in the couplet:

> How long,[1] my lord, [wilt thou be vexed with me]?
> How long,[1] my lady, [wilt thou be angry with me]?[3]

Sometimes, as in another verse of the Psalmist:

> My soul also is exceedingly dismayed;
> But Thou, Jahveh, how long?[4]

there is in Babylonian a similar ellipse of the verb, which (as in the English Bible, which renders the line: 'How long wilt Thou punish me?') must be supplied from the context; compare the Babylonian lament:

> How long still, queen of heaven and earth, shepherdess of pale-faced men?
> How long still, queen of holy Eanna, the pure treasury?
> How long still, queen, whose feet weary not, whose knees hasten?
> How long still, queen of battle and all wars?[5]

here the pronoun 'thou' is inserted without a verb, so that the meaning is, 'How long still dost thou tarry, O queen?' Of the same nature is the call to God, who sleeps, to awake and

[1] Hebr. *'adh māthāy* and Bab. *adî matî* respectively.

[2] Psalm lxxix. 5. [3] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iv. 81–88. [4] Psalm vi. 3.

[5] Ungnad, *op. cit.* p. 218, ll. 27-30.

be stirring on behalf of His servant who invokes Him; the words

> Arouse Thyself! Why sleepest Thou, O Lord?
> Awake, cast (us) not off for ever[1]

find a parallel in the cry of the devout Babylonian worshipper, who exclaims:

> How long will the lord who sleeps still sleep?
> The lord who sleeps—how long will he sleep?
> The Great Mountain, the Father, Bel, who sleeps—how long will he sleep?
> The shepherd who fixes the fates, who sleeps—how long will he sleep?[2]

The last line at the same time recalls the verse

> Behold, he that keepeth Israel
> Doth neither slumber nor sleep.[3]

In all of these instances the resemblances are hardly more than verbal. Even more markedly is this so in the case of such phrases as:

> They mount up[4] to heaven,[5]

or

> Let them go down[4] into She'ol[6]

where the Hebrew verb *'ālāh*, 'ascended,' is identical in form with the Babylonian *elû*, 'to ascend,' which is also used of going up into heaven. The Hebrew *yāradh*, 'descended,' corresponds with the cognate Babylonian verb *arâdu*, 'to descend,' as employed of going down into the grave. Compare the antithesis expressed by these two verbs in two lines of a Babylonian hymn:

> If it is well with them, they talk of ascending[7] into heaven;
> If they are in trouble, they speak of descending[7] into hell.[8]

[1] Psalm xliv. 23.
[2] Jeremias, *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des Alten Orient*, p. 561.
[3] Psalm cxxi. 4. [4] Hebrew *'ālāh* and *yāradh* respectively.
[5] Psalm cvii. 26. [6] Psalm lv. 16. [7] Bab. *elû* and *arâdu* respectively.
[8] Langdon, *op. cit.* p. 42, ll. 46-47.

In fact, to express these ideas of going up into heaven and coming down into hell it is nearly as difficult for English and German to avoid using the cognate roots *gehen*, 'to go,' and *kommen*, 'to come,' as it must have been for the Hebrews to eschew roots common to their own and the Babylonian language.

More definitely related are a number of specifically religious turns of expression which recur continually in the sacred literature of the Babylonians and Hebrews. Thus both said 'raised the countenance of' (Ass. *ûbil* or *nashi pāna* [1] and Hebr. *nāsā' pĕnē'* [2]) in the sense of 'forgave' a person. Both again said 'to seek the countenance of' in the sense of 'to turn to' a person for help. This is used in Hebrew of turning to God, as in the Psalm:

Thy face, Jahveh, will I seek [3]

and, in another Psalm, in a slightly different form:

As for me, may I behold Thy face in righteousness.[4]

In Babylonian, however, it has hitherto been found, as far as I know, only of soliciting the aid of a human king, as in a letter found at Tall-ul-'Amarnâ:

My lord, my god, my sun, what more do I seek? For ever do I seek the beautiful face of my lord the king. [5]

Conversely, the worshipper besought his god 'to see' or 'look upon' him, *i.e.* to remember him in his trouble. Thus the Hebrew cried:

See my affliction and trouble;
And forgive all my sins,[6]

[1] Zimmern, *op. cit.* p. 47.

[2] Psalm lxxxii. 2.

[3] Psalm xxvii. 8.

[4] Psalm xvii. 15.

[5] Knudzton, *op. cit.* vol. i. No. 165, ll. 4–8; cf. No. 166, ll. 6–8.

[6] Psalm xxv. 18.

while the Babylonian entreated his god or goddess to

> Look upon me, my lady, accept my supplication,
> Gaze upon me and hear my prayer,[1]

of which the last line calls to mind and should be compared with another verse in the Psalter:

> Be gracious unto me and hear my prayer,[2]

if indeed a sentiment of such frequent occurrence needs illustration. Again, the pious of both races aspire to walk in the presence of their god and, to express this hope, use words philologically connected (Ass. *ittalak* and Hebr. *hithhallēkh*, 'walked'), so that the Hebrew words of the verse:

> I shall walk before Jahveh in the lands of the living [3]

cannot fail to recall the corresponding Babylonian verse:

> Let me walk before thee a life of long days.[4]

But it should be noticed that the Babylonian, unlike the wise Hebrew king who refrained from asking length of days, makes it clearer than does the Hebrew Psalmist that a long life is what he desires. Yet the Babylonian, like the Hebrew Psalmist, is ready to acknowledge himself the servant of his god, and as such he pours out his supplication to him; thus the Hebrew prayer:

> I beseech Thee, Jahveh, for I am Thy servant;
> I am Thy servant, the son of Thy handmaid [5]

should be compared with the Babylonian lament:

> [I am] thy slave; in sorrow I cry unto [thee],[6]

while the next line in the same Hebrew Psalm:

> Thou hast loosed my thongs [5]

[1] Gressmann, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 87, ll. 43–44.

[2] Psalm iv 1. [3] Psalm cxvi. 9. [4] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iii. 27.

[5] Psalm cxvi. 16. [6] Zimmern, *op. cit.* i. 3–4.

recalls the parallel Babylonian prayer:

Loosen his bonds, undo his fetters.[1]

Again, as the Hebrew poet cried:

I am bent, I bow down exceedingly,[2]

so the Babylonian said:

Full of sorrow am I bowed down, looking not up.[3]

Both also humbled themselves before God, the Hebrew saying:

My heart is not haughty nor my eyes lofty;
Neither walk I in things too great
Or in things too difficult for me,[4]

and the Babylonian saying:

I have not gotten wisdom; myself I am not wise.[5]

Both, again, prayed in all humility to God to hearken to their prayers, as the Hebrew Psalmist did in the words:

Turn Thee towards me and be gracious unto me [6]

and the Babylonian in similar words:

Turn thy neck toward me and accept my supplication;
Be gracious unto thy servant with whom thou art angry.[7]

For both peoples thought of their God as an angry god; for, as the Hebrew Psalmist lamented:

We are consumed in Thine anger,
And are dismayed in Thy fury,[8]

so the Babylonian could complain:

The lord hath looked on me in the fury of his heart,
The god hath visited me in the rage of his heart;
Ishtar hath been angry with me and sorely treated me.[9]

[1] *Ibid.* viii. 36.
[2] Psalm xxxviii. 6.
[3] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iv. 64–65 ; cf. v. 61.
[4] Psalm cxxxi. 1.
[5] Zimmern, *op. cit.* v. 57.
[6] Psalm xxv. 16 ; cf. lxix. 16 and lxxxvi. 16.
[7] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iii. 18-21.
[8] Psalm xc. 7.
[9] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iv. 48-53.

Both were conscious of their deep sins, for which cognate words (Ass. *ḫiṭu* and Hebr. *ḥēṭĕ*)' were used, and were ready to confess them. But their conceptions of sin were totally different; the Babylonian sought only to learn what ritual he had violated or forgotten to perform, that he might put himself right in the eyes of his god; the Hebrew prayed to be washed throughly from moral sin, and to have a clean heart created within him. In this lies the difference between the Hebrew's cry :

> Wash me throughly from my wickedness,
> And cleanse me from my sin,[1]

and the Babylonian's request:

> Drive away my sin; accept my countenance.[2]

The Hebrew knew how he had sinned and could say:

> For I know my transgressions;
> And my sin is continually before me,[3]

whereas the Babylonian could only speak vaguely of the ritual omissions of which he was aware or of which he was not aware:

> The wrong which I have done I know not;
> The sin which I have committed I know not.[4]

Nor could he say, like the Hebrew Psalmist:

> Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned,
> And done that which is evil in Thy sight;[5]

for he did not even know what deity he had offended:

> My god, my sins are many, great are my misdeeds;
> My goddess, my sins are many, great are my misdeeds;
> God known (or) unknown, my sins are great, great are my misdeeds.[6]

These passages, I submit, shew that the Babylonian went through the same religious experience as the Hebrew—for he was ultimately of the same stock as the Hebrew—and came to

[1] Psalm li. 2.
[2] Zimmern, *op. cit.* ii. 34.
[3] Psalm li. 3.
[4] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iv. 42–45.
[5] Psalm li. 4.
[6] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iv. 38–41.

express that experience in hymns and psalms of a similar kind, and sometimes even in words philologically the same; for both spoke languages derived from the same parent speech. Yet not only does this not prove that the one side borrowed from the other, but the fact also that the Babylonian failed to exhibit the same capacity for religious development as the Hebrew did makes it very unlikely that the Hebrews, who were spiritually far more advanced than the Babylonians, should have borrowed any of the external setting from their less gifted neighbours. Since the religious sense innate in the two peoples would in any case have had to seek means for its expressions, what could have been more natural than that both races, closely akin and speaking closely related languages, should have found expression for their ideas along similar lines?

Hardly more definite is the much emphasised connection between Babylonian and Hebrew curses invoked against an enemy. Both Babylonian and Hebrew prays that his days may be short, the former saying:

> May the great gods curse with a curse that cannot be loosed,
> May they command that he live not a single day![1]

or again:

> May Nabû, the exalted son, the establisher
> Of the month and the year,
> Shorten his days![2]

the latter saying:

> Let his days be few![3]

Again, the Babylonian says:

> May his name perish, may his seed be destroyed![4]

while the Hebrew says:

> Let his posterity be for cutting off;
> In the next generation let their names be blotted out![5]

[1] King, *Babylonian Boundary-Stones*, No. 4, col. iv., ll. 6-7.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 11, col. iii., ll. 6-8.
[3] Psalm cix. 8.
[4] King, *op. cit.* No. 36, col. vi., ll. 50-51.
[5] Psalm cix. 13.

Or again, the Babylonian prays:

> May Gula, the mighty physician, the great lady,
> Put grievous sickness in his body
> So that he pass light and dark blood like water ![1]

and the Hebrew cries:

> Let their eyes be dark that they see not,
> And make their loins continually to totter.[2]

What else could a man who resented strongly an injury done to him by an enemy do but wish him sickness, shortness of life, speedy death or failure of posterity ? Surely it is overstating the case to claim that the Hebrew writers have appropriated to their own use against their enemies the terrible forms of imprecation used by the Babylonians ! These desires are not, unfortunately, desires exclusively confined to the Babylonians and to the Hebrews, who are supposed to have taken them over from them. Far more like borrowing, on the contrary, is the use of the formula:

> Let them be blotted out of the book of the living![3]

which has been found in Sumerian literature in the form:

> May his name be removed from the tablets in the house of his god![4]

But it is by no means certain that this phrase is not far older than any alleged borrowing can have been, as I shall hereafter endeavour to shew.

It is time now to leave these largely external similarities between the languages of the two peoples and look at some of their theological conceptions, with a view to seeing if it can be proved that any of those found in the Hebrew Psalter owe their origin to Babylonia. Let us examine first certain details in the picture of heaven and of Shĕ'ōl presented to us in the

[1] King, *op. cit.* No. 7, col. ii., ll. 29-36. [2] Psalm lxix. 23.
[3] Psalm lxix. 28.
[4] Jensen in Schrader, *op. cit.* vol. iii., pt. i., pp. 48-49, l. 15.

Psalms, which seem to reflect Babylonian ideas. In the Psalms Jahveh has His throne over the heavenly waters, where

He layeth the beams of his upper chambers in the waters,[1]

the allusion being to the Hebrew belief that above the solid firmament there were huge reservoirs of water which served as the store-houses of the rain; so also in Babylonia Shamash, the sun-god of Sippar, was depicted sitting in a throne-room erected over the heavenly waters; for both Hebrews and Babylonians thought of their supreme gods as gods of the heavenly heights and of heaven as their proper dwelling-place. Jahveh also is one

Who walketh upon the wings of the wind,[2]

and

Who came swooping upon the wings of the wind; [3]

this conception of the winds as winged is found also in Babylonian mythology, where in the old legend Adapa broke the wings of the south wind, and in that of the theft of the tablets of fate Zû, the god of the storm-wind, is described as having wings.

Heaven, moreover, is a place with doors; for it is said of Jahveh that

He opened the doors of heaven.[4]

Similarly the Babylonian heaven was furnished at both ends with doors, by which the sun and the moon on their rising went forth from, and on their setting returned to, heaven; the celestial palace, too, of Anu, the heaven-god, is described in the legend of Adapa as having doors, as have those of Bel and Ea in heaven in the myth of Etana. Later, in the books of Enoch, Baruch and the Testament of Levi, these heavenly doors receive a prominence which is not accorded to them in the Psalms. It is not, therefore, I think, unfair to infer from this fact that the doors of heaven were a primitive conception, evolved in an anthropomorphic period, when God's

[1] Psalm civ. 3. [2] Psalm civ. 3. [3] Psalm xviii. 10. [4] Psalm lxxviii. 23.

heavenly dwelling was pictured as an earthly palace, which was originally common both to the Babylonians and the Hebrews, but which after the Exile received a greater emphasis from the importation of Babylonian ideas into Jewish religious circles. Further, God had fixed the waters that are above the heavens in their places:

> He hath made them to stand for ever and ever;
> He hath given (them) a decree which none shall overstep.[1]

Similarly, but less poetically, the Babylonian author of the 'Epic of Creation' tells of Marduk how:

> He set up the half of her (*sc.* Tiâmat) and made the heavens as a covering;
> He shot the bolt and caused watchmen to take up their stations,
> He directed them not to let her waters come forth.[2]

In both, the deity appoints for the waters their place and fixes bounds over which they may not flow.

This last quotation comes from that passage in the Babylonian epic which tells how Marduk after a long struggle defeated Tiâmat, who personified the formless, watery chaos which preceded the making of the universe, and her fearful brood of monsters and, having cut her into two halves, made of them the upper and lower firmament; half he spread above to form the heavens and half below to become the earth. We must now enquire whether any echoes of this old myth are still to be heard in the Hebrew Psalms. In the first place, it need hardly be said that the Hebrew *tĕhôm*, 'the deep,' which is used of the primaeval waters in Genesis and in the Psalms, in such passages as:

> Thou coverest it with the deep like as with a vesture;
> The waters stood above the mountains,[3]

is philologically the same word as the Babylonian *Tiâmat* (a feminine personification of the deep formed from the same

[1] Psalm cxlviii. 6. [2] Langdon, *The Epic of Creation*, iv. 138-140.
[3] Psalm civ. 6.

root[1]), the name of the female monster of the watery chaos whom Marduk conquered.[2] This is undoubtedly an old word for the primaeval waters handed down independently to Babylonians and Hebrews alike from the primitive speech of the Semitic race. But, secondly, there are more important echoes of the old story in the Psalter. The most noteworthy occurs in the passage describing how God worked salvation in days of old:

> Thou didst divide the sea by Thy strength;
> Thou brakest the heads of the monsters upon the waters;
> Thou didst crush the head of Leviathan in pieces.[3]

This used generally to be taken to refer to the Exodus, and the 'monsters' and 'Leviathan' were supposed to designate monstrous beasts like the crocodile and the hippopotamus, which haunted the Nile. But a reference to the old legend of a fight with the evil monsters of the deep at the time of the creation is intrinsically not improbable, and is made far more likely by the explicit reference to that event three verses later, which tells how God established the light and the sun and fixed all the borders of the earth and formed summer and winter. The same interpretation holds good of the parallel passage in a later Psalm:

> Thou rulest the proud swelling of the sea;
> When the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them.
> Thou didst crush Rahab as one that is slain,[4]

where Rahab, like Leviathan in the other passage, stands for the primaeval waters, not for Egypt; for this Psalm also goes on to describe the foundation of the world and the fulness thereof, and the creation of the North and the South. In these two Psalms the allusion is clear; less so is it in certain other

[1] The same feminine termination is seen in Bab. *Idiglat* = Hebr. *Ḥiddeqel*, 'the Tigris'.

[2] It should be noticed that in such passages as these the Hebr. *tĕhôm* is used as a proper-name without the definite article, like Bab. *Tiâmat* (Jirku, *op. cit.* pp. 19-20).

[3] Psalm lxxiv. 13–14.

[4] Psalm lxxxix. 9–10.

passages which describe the boisterous fury of the deep. Such are the two following:

> The streams, O Jahveh, have lifted up,
> Have lifted up their voice;
> The streams lift up their din.
> More than the voice of many waters,
> Glorious (waters), billows of the sea,
> Is Jahveh glorious on high,[1]

and

> Therefore we will not fear though the earth do change,
> Though the mountains be moved into the heart of the seas;
> Though the waters thereof are in tumult and foam,
> Though the mountains shake at the proud swelling thereof.[2]

Here the absence of any definite mention of God's creative work makes the reference uncertain; the authors may merely be describing natural phenomena. Yet, again, a recollection of the myth of a dragon-slaying god may perhaps be recognised in another passage, which describes how the righteous man who puts his trust in Jahveh shall by Him be protected, and goes on to say:

> Thou shalt tread upon the lion and cobra;
> The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample underfoot.[3]

I need hardly add that among Tiâmat's brood were great lions, raging serpents and vipers, nor that a frequent *motif* in Babylonian art is the contest between the god of creation and diverse monsters.

Before leaving these echoes of the ancient legend of the great struggle that preceded the creation of the universe, I must for the sake of completeness call your attention to a few more passages in the Psalms which are supposed to contain even more faded reflections of it. The first is the picture of the watery origin of the world:

> He founded the earth upon its bases,
> That it should not be moved for ever.
> Thou coveredst it with the deep like as with a vesture;

[1] Psalm xciii. 3–4. [2] Psalm xlvi. 2–3 [3] Psalm xci. 13.

The waters stood above the mountains,
At Thy rebuke they fled,
At the voice of Thy thunder they sped in alarm—
The mountains rose, the plains between them sank—
Unto the place which Thou hadst founded for them.
Thou didst set a bound which they should not pass over,
That they might not return to cover the earth.[1]

This may, it is true, recall various Babylonian accounts of the same event, how 'heaven and earth arose out of the deep of the water'[2] and to 'the stream that created everything,'[3] and how, 'when the earth had been put down, the heavens stretched out, the sun gleamed, fire blazed forth, waters flowed in, the wind blew';[4] but it is no more a definite reference to Babylonian literature than it is to the opening chapters of Genesis. It is nothing more, I submit, than a poetic version of popular Semitic folk-lore, common to both races, from which the cruder details have been removed. The same may be said of the verse:

He gathered the waters together on an heap;
He putteth the deeps in treasure-houses.[5]

Even more vague is the reference in another Psalm, in which it is said:

Then the bed of the waters was seen,
And the foundations of the world were laid bare
At Thy rebuke, O Jahveh,
At the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.[6]

Other passages also cited in this connection are the following:

The waters saw Thee, O God,
The waters saw Thee, they were in pangs;
Yea, the deeps trembled,[7]

[1] Psalm civ. 5–9.
[2] Landersdorfer, *Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen*, pt. vii., no. 5, pp. 62 ff.
[3] King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation*, vol. i., pp. 128-129.
[4] Zimmern, *Zum babylonischen Neujahrsfest*, pt. ii., p. 47.
[5] Psalm xxxiii. 7. [6] Psalm xviii. 15. [7] Psalm lxxvii. 16.

and

> Who stilleth the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves,
> And the tumult of the peoples;[1]

the second of these, after mentioning God's creation of the mountains in the preceding verse, tells how He at the same time stilled the rebellious waves of the watery chaos, even as He subdues the tumult of the nations.

The term Leviathan, which without doubt originally designated one of the monsters spawned in the primaeval ocean, naturally came to be used of such monsters of the deep as the whale, which was known to a people who dwelt on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Such is its connotation in the praise of the sea as one of God's manifold works:

> There go the ships
> (And) Leviathan whom Thou hast formed to play therein.[2]

The allusion to Tiâmat's brood is here very dim, and at the most rests merely on the use of the word 'leviathan' in conjunction with its possible origin. Even more far-fetched is it to cite in this connection 'the wild beasts of the reeds,'[3] which is a designation of the crocodile or the hippopotamus, and is in any case in the Psalter merely a symbolical term for Egypt. To see a reference to the myth of Tiâmat and her monstrous brood wherever strange, unnatural monsters are mentioned in the Old Testament, is an exaggeration of the functions of comparative mythology.

In both mythologies the earth was founded upon waters. The Hebrew poet relates of God how

> He hath founded it upon the seas,
> And maketh it fast upon the streams,[4]

precisely as the Babylonian poet tells how:

> The lord measured the dimensions of Apsû;
> As its counterpart he fixed a vast abode, (even) the universe,[5]

[1] Psalm lxv. 7. [2] Psalm civ. 26. [3] Psalm lxviii. 30.
[4] Psalm xxiv. 2. [5] Langdon, *op. cit.* iv. 143–144.

that is, Marduk measured the extent of Apsû, the vast ocean,[1] and fixed precisely over it the universe, which was called Esharra, 'the house of the universe.' The earth, when created, was held by both races to be the property of the creator: in the words of the Psalmist:

> The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof,
> The world and they that dwell therein;
> For He hath founded it upon the seas,[2]

or, in the words of an unknown Babylonian writer about Marduk:

> Because he had built habitations and formed the dry land
> Father Enlil named him lord of lands.[3]

This earth, which God had created, was the mother of all created things; for out of it came man, according to the Hebrew writer, who said:

> My frame was not hidden from Thee,
> When I was made in secret,
> (And) curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.[4]

In the same way the author of the 'Epic of Gilgamesh' believed that the soul came from Hades.

Beneath the earth was Shĕ'ōl, the abode of the dead, which in Babylonian mythology 'the waters of death' surrounded:

> Difficult is the passage, hard is the way thereto,
> And deep are the waters of death which bar the approach thereto.[5]

[1] From the Bab. *apsû* are derived the Hebr. *'ephes*, 'end' (of the world) and the Gk. ἄβυσσος, 'abyss.' [2] Psalm xxiv. 2.

[3] Langdon, *op. cit.*, vii. 116-117. [4] Psalm cxxxix. 15.

[5] Dhorme, *Choix de Textes Religieux Assyro-Babyloniens*, pp. 284-285 (*Gilgamesh*, x. 24–25).

It has been suggested that these waters of death reappear in the Psalm which describes how

> The billows of death encompassed me,
> And the torrents of destruction affrighted me.[1]

It used to be thought that the reference was to the dangers of swollen mountain-torrents in Palestine; but the following verse, which runs:

> The nooses of She'ol surrounded me;
> The gins of death confronted me,[2]

lends plausibility to the new interpretation. Now the Hebrew words in the second line of this verse mean literally 'the torrents of Belial,' a word possibly derived from *bĕlî*, 'not,' and *ya'ăl(eh)*, 'comes up'; there is therefore some probability in Cheyne's suggestion that the phrase should be rendered 'the torrents of not coming up,' *i.e.* from which there is no return, in which case it will constitute a remarkable parallel to *mât* or *irṣit lâ târi*, 'the land of no return,' a Babylonian designation of the grave.[3] The idea, indeed, that Shĕ'ōl was a place whence none returned is found in a number of passages in the Old Testament. This land, further, was guarded in Babylonian legend by seven[4] or, in another account, fourteen gates,[5] which may be reflected in the address to Jahveh as:

> Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.[6]

The doors and bolts of She'ol, it is needless to say, are mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Let us glance cursorily over these parallels before giving a verdict on their origin. Did not the Romans also think of the winds as winged? For Ovid speaks of the south-wind

[1] Psalm xviii. 4. [2] *Ibid.* 5.

[3] Cheyne in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vol. i. cols. 526–527.

[4] Jensen in Schrader, *op. cit.* vol. vi. pt. i. pp. 82–85, ll. 42–62.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 78–79, No. 2, ll. 1–8. [6] Psalm ix. 13.

in the words *madidis Notus evolat alis*.[1] The belief in vast reservoirs of waters in the heavens is a natural idea to account for the apparently endless supply of rain; so too was the idea that the supreme deity, be it Shamash or Jahveh, dwelt high enthroned above the waters or, in the case of Zeus and Jupiter, above the clouds. To picture this heavenly dwelling-place with gates and the winds as winged is an anthropomorphic conception at which both races might have arrived independently. Olympus, as early as Homer's *Iliad*, is described as furnished with gates in the verses:

αὐτόμαται δὲ πύλαι μύκον οὐρανοῦ, ἂς ἔχον Ὧραι,
τῇς ἐπιτέτραπται μέγας οὐρανὸς Οὔλυμπός τε.[2]

The conception, too, of a place under the world whither the dead go is an obvious development from the visible grave where the dead man's body is put away. Babylonians, Hebrews, Greeks and Romans, as well as other races, who knew of subterranean waters supplying springs and wells and of rivers which ran for a part of their course underground, easily came to think of it as situated amongst these waters; and, finally, as heaven had been provided with doors like any human habitation, so each of these races furnished with doors the dwelling-places of their dead. Can we then fairly say that any of these ideas are so peculiar to Babylon that they can have arisen only there and, when found elsewhere, must have been borrowed thence?

The doctrine, on the contrary, that the earth was created out of the halves of a monster split into two parts by a god may have been derived by both Babylonians and Hebrews from their common home, and not have been borrowed by the one from the other. In the Hebrew allusions, at least, it looks like some old, half-forgotten myth, lingering on in the hearts of the people, not a recent loan from a neighbouring race. So rare a type of creation-story is not likely to have grown up

[1] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, i. 264. [2] Homer, *Iliad* v. 750.

independently among both races; yet even it finds a parallel in the Icelandic legend, which can have no connection with the Semitic myth, telling how the universe was fashioned out of the carcase of the giant Ymir. Even more has the story of a struggle between the Creator and diverse monsters the colour of an ancient legend of the Semites, embedded in Hebrew folk-lore; for it is so alien to the Hebrew religious teaching that it can hardly have made its way into the Old Testament as the result of conscious borrowing within historic times. In fact, so much was it disapproved that at an early date efforts seem to to have been made to explain it away as a reference to Egypt. For it was the Hebrew doctrine that the creation of the world by God was effortless; in the words of the Psalmist:

> By the word of Jahveh were the heavens made;
> And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth,[1]

and in the case of the earth:

> He spake, and it was;
> He commanded, and it stood.[2]

Are we not then to see in this dual account of creation in the Old Testament, the one by a victorious deity after a bloody struggle, the other by the effortless command of an omnipotent God, a struggle on the part of the old folk-lore which loved to linger among the people and found ever an echo in their literature against the higher teaching of the religious leaders of the people? They could not, it may be, stamp out popular mythology from the minds of a people who clung tenaciously to their national legends, but they could prevent the importation of novel ideas; for the common people are ever suspicious of novelty, especially when it comes from abroad. I hold it preferable, therefore, to see in this legendary struggle rather a relic of proto-Semitic mythology than an innovation from Assyro-Babylonian theology.

[1] Psalm xxxiii. 6. [2] *Ibid.* 9.

God's kingship is an almost universal tenet of religion; for a metaphor borrowed from a human estate is easily applicable to Him. It is perhaps most clearly taught in the Psalms in the well-known words:

> For Jahveh is most high (and) to be feared,
> A great king over all the earth,[1]

and in Babylonian literature in a hymn addressed to Marduk, the supreme deity of the Babylonian pantheon:

> In heaven art thou exalted, on earth thou art king,
> Thou the wisest and most cunning of the gods.
> He it is who foundeth all habitations, who sustaineth the ends of the earth and the countries.[2]

The last line recalls the fact that to Jahveh also wisdom is ascribed by the Psalmist:

> How manifold are Thy works, O Jahveh!
> In wisdom hast Thou made them all.[3]

But kingship was not ascribed to Marduk alone as 'lord of the gods of heaven and earth,' 'the king of the gods' or even 'the king' *par excellence*; Anu, the heaven-god, was also called 'the king' or 'the king of the Igigi and of the Anunnaki.' It was, indeed, a favourite title of various gods among them, and therefore does not need to be pressed. Further, the word both of Jahveh and of the Babylonian gods was final; Jahveh

> Sendeth forth His word,[4]

and His decrees are fulfilled; so the other gods say to Marduk:

> Speak thou thy word,[5]

and his command is immediately accomplished. There are, indeed, hymns devoted to the praise of the 'word' of the various gods much as Psalm cxix. dwells on the word of Jahveh.

[1] Psalm xlvii. 2. [2] Ungnad, *op. cit.* p. 172, No. 5, l. 7.
[3] Psalm civ. 24. [4] Psalm cvii. 20. [5] Langdon, *op. cit.* iv. 23.

God's dwelling-place was above the waters in heaven; but He had a throne on 'His holy mountain' like the Babylonian 'mountain of the gods,' sometimes depicted as situated in the far North,

> In the uttermost parts of the North, the city of the great king,[1]

even as Anu's throne was localised in the northern heavens, and especially at the North Pole. The later representation of God's throne in heaven, surrounded by dazzling light, which we find in a later Psalm, where He is invoked with the words:

> Who puttest on light as a mantle,
> Who stretchest out the heaven like a tent-curtain,[2]

is superficially attributable to astral influence and may therefore owe something to Babylonian theology, since it represents a change from the normal, earlier picture. It is at least worth noticing, however, that in the legend of Adapa Anu's dwelling is conceived as the bright heaven wherein is his throne. Yet even this idea is not so far-fetched, but that the Psalmist might have reached it himself! For in their myths other nations have located the home of their gods, like that of Zeus, on some snow-clad mountain in the north.

Again, Jahveh, Anu and Marduk were armed deities. Jahveh wielded a club and a staff to defend and comfort those that trusted in him and Anu a sceptre and a staff; so too, when Marduk was raised to the leadership of the heavenly host, the gods gave him a throne and a sceptre. As for Jahveh:

> If a man do not turn, He will whet His sword;
> He hath bent His bow and fixed it;
> For him also He hath prepared the weapons of death;
> He maketh His arrows fiery,[3]

[1] Psalm xlviii. 2. [2] Psalm civ. 2. [3] Psalm vii. 12–13.

and He is thus armed precisely as Marduk:

> Who made ready a bow and decreed it as his weapon;
> The arrow he caused to ride thereon and fixed the bow-string;
> He lifted the toothed sickle and grasped it in his right hand;
> He hung the bow and the quiver at his right hand,[1]

and who bare:

> Bow, arrows and sword as weapons of war,[2]

wherewith He overcame Tiâmat and Kingu her spouse. Again it is said of Jahveh:

> He sent out His arrows and scattered them,
> And shot forth lightnings and discomfited them,[3]

just as it is said of Marduk:

> The lightning he set before him;
> With a burning flame was his body filled.[4]

Marduk too

> Drove the chariot of the storm, the irresistible, the terrible,[5]

and

> His head was clothed with a sheen of flame,[6]

even as Jahveh

> Came swooping upon the wings of the wind,[7]

and

> Out of the brightness before Him
> There passed through His thick clouds
> Hailstones and coals of fire,[8]

while

> Fire out of His mouth devoured.[9]

In other words, Jahveh and Marduk are both portrayed as equipped with the panoply of thunder and lightning and riding upon the storm-winds. While, however, to the monotheistic Hebrew it was Jahveh alone who controlled the forces of nature,

[1] Langdon, *op. cit.* iv. 35-38. [2] Ungnad, *op. cit.* p. 173, No. 5, l. 19.
[3] Psalm xviii. 14. [4] Langdon, *op. cit.* iv. 39-40. [5] *Ibid.* 50.
[6] *Ibid.* 58. [7] Psalm xviii. 10. [8] *Ibid.* 12. [9] *Ibid.* 8.

the Babylonian ascribed different spheres of influence to different gods. While, therefore, the Hebrews thought of Jahveh also as the god who shook the earth in His wrath, as the Psalmist said:

> The earth shook,
> Yea, the heavens dropped (rain) at the presence of God:
> Yon Sinai (shook) at the presence of God,[1]

and

> The foundations also of the mountains trembled
> And swayed to and fro because He was angry;[2]

by the Babylonians this function was assigned to a different deity, Adad or Ramman, the weather-god:

> Possessor of the lightning, lord of the storm-flood,
> Who destroyest the heavens, the mountains and the seas![3]

Of him the Babylonian poet said:

> When the lord is wroth, the heavens tremble before him.
> When Adad is angry, the earth shakes before him,
> Great mountains are cast down before him.[4]

Again both Jahveh and Marduk control the beneficent as well as the destructive forces of nature; thus Jahveh is praised as one:

> Who covereth the heaven with clouds,
> Who prepareth rain for the earth,[5]

while Marduk is lauded in the words:

> Thou rainest rain in abundance, thou callest up mighty floods.[6]

Here, therefore, is another of the essential differences which distinguish Babylonian from Hebrew psalms. Yet it need not be supposed that, because both peoples ascribe earthquakes and other disturbances of nature to the wrath of their gods, that the one has borrowed from the other either idea or imagery.

[1] Psalm lxviii. 8. [2] Psalm xviii. 7.
[3] King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*, No. 21, ll. 80-81.
[4] Ungnad, *op. cit.* p. 194, No. 3*a*, ll. 1–3.
[5] Psalm cxlvii. 8. [6] Ungnad, *op. cit.* p. 173, No. 5, l. 23.

Round about Jahveh was a heavenly court and a council of advisors, amongst whom He is described as

> A God greatly to be dreaded in the council of the holy ones,
> And terrible above all them that are round about Him.[1]

Elsewhere these divine beings or angels are called the 'sons of God' or 'sons of gods,' and are bidden to offer Him continual praise:

> Ascribe unto Jahveh, O ye sons of gods,
> Ascribe unto Jahveh glory and strength.[2]

These 'sons of God' perform for Jahveh the same functions as the Igigi, 'the gods of the upper world,' who represent the host of visible stars,[3] and the Anunnaki, 'the gods of the lower world,' perform for the principal deities of the Babylonian pantheon. Thus Anu and Ishtar are surrounded by the starry host who are their warriors. In the 'Epic of Creation' the Igigi and the Anunnaki are the beings with whom Marduk takes counsel and who execute his commands, and in a myth of Etana they are found serving Anu as counsellors. In a hymn to Sin their duty is to fall down and worship him:

> When thy word rings out in heaven, let the Igigi throw themselves down on their faces;
> When thy word rings out on earth, let the Anunnaki kiss the ground,

even as

> The heavens do tell the glory of God,
> And the firmament declareth His handy-work.[4]

The stars, like the angels, the sun and the moon, are bidden by the Psalmist to praise Jahveh. Sometimes, as in the myth

[1] Psalm lxxxix. 7.

[2] Psalm xxix. 1.

[3] Called θεοὶ βούλαιοι by Diodorus Siculus (*Bibliotheca Historia*, ii. 30, § 6).

[4] Jastrow, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 437.

just mentioned, the Igigi and Anunnaki form the great assembly in which the destinies of earth and of mankind are fixed; the fates so ordained were then duly recorded on 'the tablets of fate,' which were divided into two classes, 'the tablets of good' and 'the tablets of evil,' and were kept by Nabû, the scribe of the gods. The *rôle* of the heavenly scribe in later Judaism does not here concern us; but the Hebrew counterpart of these 'tablets of fate' is found in the Psalms, where the Psalmist prays concerning his enemies to God:

> Let them be blotted out of the book of the living
> And not be written with the righteous,[1]

a curse to which I have already drawn attention. There are other allusions to the book in which men's destinies are written up, in the words:

Jahveh will count them when He writeth up the peoples,[2]

and

> Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance,
> And in Thy book were all of them written,
> (Even) the days which were fashioned
> When as yet there was none of them.[3]

To be written in God's books here means to be pre-determined in the Divine mind; so to a Babylonian to read the tablets of fate was tantamount to knowing beforehand the destiny which was in store for a person. This may also be the meaning of the line:

> To execute upon them the judgment written [4]

in a late Psalm; otherwise, the 'judgment written' must mean the denunciations uttered by the prophets against the nations and their kings. Of God's judgments it is said:

> Thy judgments are (like) the great deep,[5]

[1] Psalm lxix. 28. [2] Psalm lxxxvii. 6. [3] Psalm cxxxix. 16.
[4] Psalm cxlix. 9. [5] Psalm xxxvi. 6.

in a simile recalling a passage in the Book of Proverbs, according to which wisdom dwells in the primaeval waters. This agrees with the Babylonian doctrine that *apsû*, 'the deep sea,' was the seat of wisdom; for Ea, 'the lord of wisdom,' dwelt in the deep sea.

But the praise of God's providence will not be confined to the firmament and the host of stars. Man too shall tell of His fame, as the Psalmist says:

> I will make mention of Thy name in all generations;
> Therefore shall the people give thanks unto Thee unto all generations,[1]

and again:

> All the ends of the earth shall remember and return unto Jahveh;
> And all the families of the nations shall worship before Thee,[2]

while

> It shall be told of the Lord unto the (next) generation:
> They shall come to declare His righteousness
> Unto a people that shall be born, that He hath done it.[3]

So an Assyrian poet foretold that the praise of Ashur, who in the Assyrian account of the creation took the place of the Babylonian Marduk, shall be told not only to all the peoples of the world but to generations yet unborn, saying:

> I will for ever praise his lordship,
> To reveal [his greatness] to the inhabitants of the countries,
> That later generations may hear of his glory,[4]

and again:

> Let men hold it fast and let the elder recount it,
> Let wise man and scholar ponder it together,
> Let the father tell it to his son and make him to know it,[5]

and so on. But there was an essential difference between the

[1] Psalm xlv. 17. [2] Psalm xxii. 27. [3] *Ibid.* 31.
[4] Jastrow, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 520. [5] Langdon, *op. cit.* vii. 126–128.

Babylonian and Hebrew thought: the idea of a world-empire owning the sway of Ashur belonged to the circle of political ideas centred in the Assyrian empire, whereas in Israel it passed far beyond the immediate political programme into the sphere of eschatology and the Messianic hope. The parallelism is therefore apparent rather than real.

The king is God's son in the view of the Psalmist, who says:

> Jahveh said unto me: 'Thou art My son;
> I have this day begotten thee.'[1]

In the same way Samsa-iluna, a king of the first (Amorite) dynasty of Babylon, dedicated a fortress 'to the god who begat him,' and the kings of Assyria—for example, Tiglath-Pileser (Tukulti-pal-esharra)—called themselves the sons of Ashur. The proud Ashurbanipal too appears as the child at the breast of the mother-goddess Bêlit-Ishtar. The idea was therefore widely spread among the Semites, since it is used by a king of Amorite origin about 2000 B.C. The gods also, in the Assyrian view, it was who conquered their enemies, gave their lands into the hands of their kings, and made cities and countries subject to them, precisely as, in the words of the Psalmist, Jahveh said:

> Ask of Me and I will give the nations for thy share
> And the ends of the earth for thy portion.[2]

Like an Assyrian monarch, too, his empire was to be co-extensive with the bounds of the known world:

> Let him have dominion from sea to sea,
> And from the River[3] unto the ends of the earth.[4]

As the Psalmist prayed, so Adad-nirâri III boasted that:

> From the great sea of the West to the great sea of the East his hand had conquered and subdued every country.[5]

[1] Psalm ii. 7.
[2] *Ibid.* 8.
[3] *Sc.* the Euphrates.
[4] Psalm lxxii. 8.
[5] Schrader, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 188–189, ll. 5–9.

But these were the natural boundaries of the world to all who dwelt between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea, and the mention of them as such can hardly be held to prove either that the Hebrew Psalmists borrowed a Babylonian phrase or indeed that the royal psalms were international.[1]

Lastly, a few similarities of less importance may be noticed. The Babylonian practice of anointing with herbs and sprinkling with water for the purpose of expiation is parallel to the use of hyssop in the familiar verse:

> Purge me from sin with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
> Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.[2]

The peculiar use of the word 'rest' or 'place of rest' in the verse:

> So that I sware in My anger: [3]
> 'Surely they shall not enter into My rest,'

meaning 'peace' or 'the being at peace with God,' also finds a parallel in Assyrian religious literature, where 'rest' is often used technically as an abbreviation of the formula 'may the heart of such and such a god be at rest,' that is, may he lay aside his wrath, as in the verse:

> Lady, speak graciously unto thy servant; let thy heart be at rest![4]

But hardly worth notice is the suggested resemblance between the Psalmist's thought:

> As far as the East is from the West,
> So far hath He set our transgressions from us,[5]

[1] Another objection to Prof. Gressmann's view is the fact that 'the sea' is used not only here, but possibly also in Isaiah xxi. 1 and Jeremiah li. 26, for the Euphrates, and—what is more to the point—even of the Nile (*e.g.* Nahum iii. 8 and Isaiah xix. 5); it could, without doubt, be used poetically for any large river, and has therefore no connection with the above-quoted Babylonian expression.

[2] Psalm li. 7.

[3] Psalm xcv. 11.

[4] Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, iii. 15.

[5] Psalm ciii. 12.

and the Babylonian prayer concerning sin:

May it not come nigh unto me, may it pass far away![1]

More interesting but hardly more important is the comparison of the Hebrew prayer:

Absolve Thou me from hidden faults,[2]

with the Babylonian plaint:

The error which I have committed I know not;
The sin which I have sinned I know not,[3]

which I have already explained.

Finally, it seems to have been the habit among the Babylonians and Hebrews, as well as among the Egyptians, to weigh up in prayer their merits with God. As the Psalmist urged God to try him and prove him, saying:

I have walked in Thy truth.

. . . . . .

I wash my hands in innocency
And go round Thine altar, O Jahveh,
That I may make the voice of thanksgiving to be heard
And tell of all Thy wondrous works.
Jahveh, I love the habitation of Thy house
And the place where Thy glory dwelleth,[4]

so the Babylonian cried:

I thought only of prayer and supplication;
Supplication was my wisdom, sacrifice my ordinance.
The day when men honour god, my heart was glad;
The day of following the goddess was my riches and my fair portion.

. . . . . .

I taught my land to honour the name of the god,
I instructed my people to respect the name of the goddess.[5]

[1] Zimmern in *Der Alte Orient*, vii. 3, p. 18. [2] Psalm xix. 12.
[3] Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspsalmen*, iv. 42–45. [4] Psalm xxvi. 1–8.
[5] Langdon, *Babylonian Wisdom*, pp. 39-40, ll. 23-30.

The third and fourth lines, it may be mentioned in passing, recall that other verse, where the pious Hebrew exclaims:

> I was glad at them which said unto me:
> 'We will go unto the house of Jahveh.' [1]

A liturgical device common both to Babylonian and to Hebrew and, I believe, to Egyptian hymn-writers and psalmists, was to make the god to whom the prayer or appeal was addressed suddenly interrupt it with an ocular response. A good example is found in the Psalm which begins:

> Ring out your joy unto God your strength;
> Shout unto the God of Jacob,[2]

and in which after several verses the author continues, saying in the name of the nation:

> The language of one whom I knew not I did hear,
> (Saying): 'I removed his shoulder from the burden;
> His hands were freed from the basket.[3]
> Thou calledst in trouble, and I rescued thee;' [4]

and so on. Similarly the god Nabû, invoked by Ashurbanipal in one of his prayers, breaks in upon the king's petition with the answer:

> I will protect thee, O Ashurbanipal,
> (Even) I, Nabû, unto the end of days.

[1] Psalm cxxii. 1. [2] Psalm lxxxi. 1.

[3] The basket, of which mention is here made, is the basket in which the children of Israel carried the materials of their forced labour in Egypt, and is therefore a figure for manual labour. The same metaphor is implied in the Assyro-Babylonian word *dupshikku*, 'basket,' which came to be used of every kind of service—for example, (i) of the service performed by a king in building or restoring a temple for the use of his god, in which case he commonly represented himself in a figurine of clay as bearing on his head, like a workman, a basket containing the materials for his building, and (ii) of the feudal service or *corvée* owed by a subject to the king in the form of manual labour.

[4] *Ibid.* 7.

The triumphant cry of assurance that the prayer has been heard is no isolated phenomenon but a psychological truth, and consequently meets us not infrequently in the Psalms. Let us glance at an early Psalm, of which the first stanza opens with the request:

> Jahveh, reprove me not in Thine anger,
> Neither chasten me in Thy fury,[1]

and the second with the parallel supplication:

> Return, Jahveh, rescue my soul;
> Save me for Thy kindness sake;[2]

whereas the third stanza is a cry of triumph, beginning:

> Depart from me, all ye that work wickedness;
> For Jahveh hath heard the voice of my weeping!
> Jahveh hath heard my supplication!
> Jahveh will receive my prayer.[3]

So the Babylonian at times in the course of his prayer becomes certain that he has been heard and may change his tone from that of supplication to one of exultation. Thus a long prayer to Ishtar closes with the two following stanzas:

> May my prayer and my lamentation come unto thee,
> May thy great mercy be shown unto me!
> May those that look on me in the street glorify thy name,
> And I will laud thy godhead and thy power among the dark-headed people!
> Yea, Ishtar is exalted! Yea, Ishtar is queen!
> My lady is exalted! My lady is queen!
> Irnini, the mighty daughter of Sin, hath no rival![4]

Here the last three lines, although they do not contain the same explicit acknowledgment that the worshipper's prayer has been heard, by their exultant tone at least imply his certainty

[1] Psalm vi. 1. [2] *Ibid.* 4. [3] *Ibid.* 8.

[4] Zimmern in *Der Alte Orient*, vii. 3, p. 22, ll. 99–105.

that this is so. Yet at other times the prayer remains unanswered, and the suppliant cries:

> O my God, I call by day, but Thou answerest not;
> And at night, but I find no respite; [1]

and, as does the Hebrew, so does the Babylonian sometimes experience disappointment and complain:

> I sought for help, but none grasped my hand;
> I wept, but none drew nigh to my side;
> I poured forth cries, but none heard me.[2]

For it is but to be expected that God does not always answer the suppliant, be he a Babylonian or a Hebrew or, indeed, of any other race.

Before going on, let us glance at these theological ideas and see how many are peculiar to the Babylonians and how many can be found amongst other people. The only idea which I cannot find elsewhere is that of the universal empire of the national God; but this seems to have arisen in Assyria and Palestine along different lines, and therefore to be independent. To the Assyrians it was merely an expression of their conviction, fostered by their kings as an aid towards the fulfilment of their military ambitions, that they were the destined rulers of the world; among the Hebrews it owed its origin to the monotheism of the prophets, who preached a national god intolerant primarily of any other god within His people's territory, and later even of the recognition of the divinity of the gods of other races. The other ideas, on the contrary, are common to many races: such are the kingship and fatherhood of God, which recall the title *meleh*, 'king,' given by the Canaanites to their principal god, and that of *βασιλεύς* and *πατήρ* given by the Greeks to Zeus or *rex* and *pater* given by the Romans to Jupiter; his weapons the thunder and the lightning which Zeus and Jupiter also wielded; and the council of heavenly beings which may be compared with the Greek idea of *μακάρων ἀγοραί* [3] or with Jupiter's council of *caelicolae*.

[1] Psalm xxii. 2. [2] Jastrow, *op. cit.* vol. ii. p. 103.
[3] Pindar, *Isthmia*, viii. (vii.) 29 (59).

The tablets of fate or the book of life are not, I believe, found amongst other peoples, but they are almost implied in the weighing up and judgment passed on the soul on its arrival in Hades, which are features of many religions.

The essential distinction between the religions of Babylonia and Palestine was that the one was polytheistic, the other monotheistic. Do we find in the Psalms, must be our next question, any traces of the influence of polytheism on the Hebrew thinkers? The Babylonians personified all the forces of nature, the sun and moon and stars, the ocean and the rivers, and regarded them all as gods of various power and rank; of these one who ranked highest was the sun, deified as Shamash the sun-god. Shamash was visualised as a young man whose beloved was Aya, 'the bride,' and his children were 'truth' and 'equity.' An echo of an ancient myth of the sun as a bridegroom, which is well-known in Babylonian theology, underlies the verse in the Hebrew Psalter:

> In them hath He set a tent for the sun;
> And He is like a bridegroom coming forth from his canopy;
> He rejoiceth as a mighty man to run his course.[1]

But in the Hebrew version the myth has long lost all definite form and become merely a figure of speech; in Babylonia the theologians have worked on the same material and hypostatised the sun as a real person. Nor in the Babylonian version is the sun-god's position as a bridegroom important; Aya, or the planet Venus, may be called his bride as an inferior deity, but he is not merely Aya's bridegroom. In the Hebrew account the stress is laid on the picture of the sun as a young man, emphasising his ever-youthful strength, as does the classical story of Phaethon. Both ideas may go back to a common myth, since the Baby-

[1] Psalm xix. 4–5. I find it very difficult to accept Prof. Gressmann's view, since any redactor of the Psalms would surely excise any trace of the hated heathen reaction under Manasseh unless it was introduced only to be condemned.

lonians also called Shamash 'the hero,'[1] as the Hebrew Psalmist compares the sun to 'a mighty man'; but he can hardly have borrowed his simile from contemporary Babylonian theology. To see an echo of 'truth' and 'equity,' the children or, as we should say, the attributes of Shamash, in those ascribed by the Psalmist to Jahveh:

> Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of Thy throne;
> Kindness and faithfulness come to meet Thy face,[2]

is to carry comparison to absurd lengths. But again there is a real difference in the thought; the Babylonians personified abstract qualities as the children of the god of justice, the Hebrews ascribed to Jahveh certain abstract qualities as His proper attributes. Man was surrounded by all kinds of dark and gruesome beings, who lay in wait day and night to compass his destruction; by day there were fevers and plagues due to the scorching rays of the sun, by night there was pestilence, a demon slinking around in the darkness. To these is the allusion in the verses:

> The sun shall not smite thee by day,
> Neither the moon by night,[3]

and

> Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night,
> Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
> For the pestilence that walketh in darkness,
> Nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day.[4]

So the Babylonians looked upon Sin, another form of the sun-god, as the cause of sickness,[5] and Nergal, the god of the sun's scorching rays, as one who brought sunstroke and fever at midday and in mid-summer, and as the god of pestilence and plague who wandered about by night and entered houses even through closed doors. He was also the Babylonian Pluto, god

[1] Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. 285 (*Gilgamesh*, x. 23). [2] Psalm lxxxix. 14.
[3] Psalm cxxi. 6. [4] Psalm xci. 5–6.
[5] Tallquist, *Maqlû*, iii. 100–101.

of the underworld, surrounded by a court of Anunnaki, lesser divine beings ready to do his bidding.[1] But such ideas are not confined to these people; for 'the arrow that flieth by day' is identical with the shafts of far-shooting Apollo, and 'the destruction that wasteth at noon-day' is none other than the *meridianus daemon* of the Romans. The same rather obvious figures of speech have in fact occurred independently in different parts of the world. Little different is the case of the protecting deity or guardian angel, if anything is to be made of the *ilu nâṣiru*, 'guardian god,' of Babylonian religion and the guardian angels of Jewish theology, which appear in the verse:

> For He shall command His angels concerning thee,
> To keep thee in all thy ways.[2]

Now the *ilu nâṣiru*, 'guardian god,' was closely connected with the *shêdu*, 'demon,' good or bad, and the *lamassu*, 'good demon,' of popular Babylonian theology. Just as in the case of Jahveh:

> Righteousness shall go before Him,[3]

and

> Kindness and faithfulness come to meet Thy face,[4]

so various kinds of favourable demons stood around the greater gods and goddesses of the Babylonian pantheon. For example, a worshipper prays to Ishtar:

> 'May I win to my side the good demon who [stands] before thee,
> May I win to my side the protecting demon who turns behind thee;
> May I attain the prosperity which is at thy right hand,
> May I attain the good, which is at thy left hand.'[5]

Again, Nabopolassar (Nabû-palusur) prays that Marduk may cause a good *shêdu* to go at his side and prosper him in all his

[1] Böllenrücher, Nergal, pp. 3 ff.; Zimmern in Schrader's *Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*,[2] pp. 636-638.

[2] Psalm xci. 11. [3] Psalm lxxxv. 13. [4] Psalm lxxxix. 14.

[5] Zimmern, *ibid.* pp. 455-456.

work.[1] The importance of this is that there are traces of an acquaintance with the Babylonian *shêdu*, degraded to connote simply an evil spirit, in the Hebrew Psalter, as well as in Deuteronomy. The verse in the Psalter runs :

Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,[2]

where the Hebrew word translated ' devils ' is *shēdhîm*, the plural of a word *shēdh*, (which does not actually occur) identical in form with the Babylonian *sêdu*, ' demon.' The only other passage where this word occurs in the Old Testament is in the first of the two poems at the end of the book of Deuteronomy; [3] that poem, which has been called a ' compendium of prophetical theology,' is itself fairly late, and may well be assigned to the age of Jeremiah or Ezekiel, after Israel had come into direct contact with Assyria. There are also good reasons for supposing this Psalm to be post-exilic. Further, the word is attested in Hebrew only after the period of Assyro-Babylonian contact, and the ideas underlying it are characteristically Assyrian. If then this usage is not an exilic innovation from the Assyrian religion but a relic of the proto-Semitic paganism, it is at least strange that there is no trace of it in the earlier literature. We may, therefore, fairly see in this term one of the very few cases of direct Babylonian influence on the Psalter.

Finally, in two passages of the prophets and in two of the Psalms there have been detected traces of the doctrine of the destruction of the world by conflagration. The passages in the Psalms are the following:

Fire goeth before Him,
And setteth ablaze His adversaries round about Him.
His lightnings illumined the world:
The earth saw and was in pangs.
The mountains melted like wax at the presence of Jahveh,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth; [4]

[1] Zimmern, *ibid.* pp. 455-456.
[2] Psalm cvi. 37.
[3] Deuteronomy xxxii. 17.
[4] Psalm xcvii. 3-5.

and secondly:

> Who looketh on the earth and it trembleth;
> He toucheth the mountains and they smoke.[1]

Of the two prophets who appear to allude to the same belief, Micah may and Nahum must have come under Assyrian influence. But the evidence for such an expectation in Babylonia or Assyria is indirect, coming only from Berossus through Seneca; for, as far as I know, no trace of it has hitherto been found in the native sources. Nor is it inherently improbable that a nation who thought of God as a god of lightning and into whose history was woven the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha by fire and brimstone should of itself have conceived the idea of a final conflagration of the world. The Romans were acquainted with a similar theory; for Ovid reports an old oracle:

> *affore tempus*
> *quo mare, quo tellus correptaque regia coeli*
> *ardeat.*[2]

In Babylonia the oldest method of influencing a god was the use of magic and charms; but men soon learned to approach their god with prayer and supplication without the necessary accompaniment of magic, though it is apt to appear even in the latest religious compositions of the Babylonians. Men also hoped by prayer, in conjunction with an offering or a sacrifice, to win the divine favour, so that many of the still extant hymns are bound up with sacrifice. The best occasions for this purpose were the great festivals which drew the devout into the temples; others were the dedication of a building or the inauguration of a campaign. Primarily, therefore, the psalms and hymns of the Babylonians are closely connected with the worship and ritual of particular gods, and often have a definite object.

Of the religious poetry which thus grew up the hymn played the principal part, sometimes in connection with specific rites of magic or offering, at other times to celebrate sunrise or the

[1] Psalm civ. 32. [2] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, i. 256–258; cp. i. 253–255.

New Year or the return of Marduk to his sanctuary. Other hymns are songs of thanksgiving for a victory gained over an enemy or for recovery from a serious illness. The dirges are another branch of Babylonian hymnody; they too owe their origin to the magical hymns. In them the whole land in the person of the king, who is usually the speaker, laments some public calamity, drought or pestilence or invasion, or the like. One runs:

> How long still is there to be weeping and wailing in my land?
> How long still is there to be lamentation and weeping among my people?[1]

This belongs to the class of public psalms of lamentation; but when once it is recognised that in the public lamentations the king is the speaker, it is possible to see how easy was the transference from public to private dirges, composed for the use of individuals. Finally, dirges, psalms or hymns, were written with the name of the suppliant omitted, so that he, whoever he was, could adapt it to his own use. The hymn thus acquired an impersonal and formal element; and this was carried even further in later times, when penitential psalms were composed with directions that they were to be recited so many times to 'such and such a god or goddess.' Beside these formal, methodically drawn up, hymns and psalms there came into existence a kind of litany, in which the god was addressed in the form of a dialogue between the penitent and the priest; in them the suppliant gave voice to his request and the priest supported it. An example of this type of prayer may not be out of place, as there are also Hebrew psalms (for example, Psalms cxv. and cxxxv.) of a similar type:

> *Suppliant*: I, thy servant, in anguish, cry to thee;
> Accept thou the prayer of him that bears guilt.
> If thou lookest in pity on a man, he lives.
> O almighty mistress of mankind,

[1] Zimmern in *Der Alte Orient, vii.* 3, pp. 7-8.

Merciful one, to whom it is good to turn, who acceptest my sighing.

Priest: When his god and his goddess are angry with him, he cries unto thee;
Turn thy neck towards him (and) grasp his hand.

Suppliant: Beside thee there is no guiding deity;
Look in truth upon me, accept my sighing.
Say: 'Till when? and let thy spirit[1] be appeased.
How long, my mistress? let thy face be turned towards me!
I moan like doves, I am sated with anguish.'

Priest: In woe upon woe his spirit[1] is full of anguish;
He sheds tears (and) breaks out into cries of distress.[2]

In others the priest gives an oracular answer on behalf of the god to the suppliant's request. Thus Ashurbanipal in the course of a prayer to Nabû says:

I am devoted to thee, O Nabû; forsake me not;
My life is written before thee, my soul is entrusted in the bosom of Ninlil.
I am devoted to thee, O mighty Nabû; forsake me not in the midst of my foes,[3]

to which the priest replies for the god:

Fear not, Ashurbanipal; I will give thee long life;
I will ordain good breathing for thy soul.
My mouth, which announces good tidings, blesses thee in the congregation of the gods.[4]

The only type of religious composition which was exclusively personal and individual and bore no relation to ritual and public worship was the didactic poem. This class of psalm, which is largely concerned with the futility and vanity of everything human,

[1] Literally 'liver' (*kabittu*).

[2] Zimmern, *Babylonische Busspsalmen* i. 3–30.

[3] Streck, *Assurbanipal*, vol. i. p. 347, K. 1285, ll. 19–22.

[4] *Ibid.* ll. 24–26.

has its parallel in the Psalter, as I have already shewn. This brief summary then of the various types of Babylonian psalms and hymns shews them to comprise precisely the same class of compositions as those found in the Old Testament, with one exception. There are psalms and hymns to accompany sacrifice, thanksgivings, lamentations, prayers and litanies, both for public and for private use; but there are, of course, none to accompany spells and exorcisms. Both the form, therefore, and the variety of the Hebrew Psalter finds a close parallel in Babylonian literature.

Yet the Babylonian poets never reached the heights attained by the Hebrew Psalmists. For, although Shamash, the god of justice, was praised as the enforcer of religion and morality, it is only a few lines in a hymn of 165 lines that are concerned with that aspect of him, and then in cold, abstract terms:

O Shamash, out of thy net no sinner escapes,
From thy sling no evil-doer is saved;
Far-flung is thy net for the doers of wickedness.
Against him who lifts up his eyes toward his neighbour's wife
Thy weapons go forth, and there is none to save;
When he stands before the judge, his father helps him not;
Against the word of the judge his brothers may not stand.
In a bronzen trap is he caught unawares.
Thou destroyest the horn of him who plans wrong;
Of him who abets the sinner, the ground vanishes from under his feet.
Thou causest the unjust judge to see fetters;
Him who takes a bribe and perverts justice, thou dost punish.
He who takes no bribe, who befriends the poor,
Is acceptable unto Shamash; he will live long.
The prudent judge who utters righteous judgments
Makes ready for himself a palace; a dwelling for princes is his dwelling.[1]

Here there is only the praise of an impersonal justice, uninspired by any higher feeling of love for god or fellow-man,

[1] Ongnad, *op. cit.* pp. 187-188; ll. 85.

and the rewards of justice and uprightness are purely material. Nothing, again, could well sound more sublime than the prayer:

> Turn thou into good the sin which I have done;
> May the wind carry away the error which I have committed!
> Strip off my many evil deeds as a garment!
> My god, my sins are seven times seven; forgive my sins!
> My goddess, my sins are seven times seven; forgive my sins![1]

and later:

> Forgive my sins, and I will bow down before thee.
> May thy heart be gladdened, as the heart of a mother who has given birth!
> Like a mother who has given birth, like a father who has begotten a child,
> May it be gladdened![2]

But there is even in this no real sense of sin; for the transgressions here bewailed are not moral faults, but the neglect of some service or the commission of some ritual error, of which the worshipper may or may not be aware. This he has already confessed in an earlier part of the prayer:

> I know not the sin which I have done;
> I know not the error which I have committed.[3]

In another psalm, already quoted, the writer asks the god the reason why calamity has overtaken him. For he has not withheld his prayer and supplication nor failed to observe the god's festival nor forgotten the feast of the New Moon; he has not despised the images of the gods nor spoken lightly of the name of his mighty god, but he has made prayer and supplication the rule and sacrifice the law of his life.

Another hymn, addressed to Sin the moon-god as Nannar 'the giver of light,' shews a conception of the supreme deity's unique glory almost as high as any in the Hebrew Psalter:

[1] Zimmern, *op. cit.* iv. 100–106. [2] *Ibid.* 110–112.
[3] *Ibid.* 19–21 and 42–45.

Lord, ruler of the gods, who alone in heaven and earth is exalted!
Father Nannar, . . . ruler of the gods!

. . . . . .

Of thyself begotten,
Merciful, gracious Father, who holds in his hand the life of all the land,

. . . . . .

Whose knees grow not weary, who opens a way for the gods his brothers!

. . . . . .

Who is exalted in heaven? Thou alone art exalted!
Who is exalted on earth? Thou alone art exalted!
When thy word rings forth in heaven, the Igigi bow down;
When thy word rings forth on earth, the Anunnaki kiss the ground.

. . . . . .

Thy word brings forth truth and justice that men may speak truth.
Who comprehends thy word, who rivals it?
Lord in heaven and earth, thou hast no rival among the gods thy brothers,
Lord, king of kings, whose command has no rivals, whom no god resembles in divinity.[1]

On this hymn it has been remarked that one who speaks thus of his god can hardly have room in his heart for other gods, and that it is scarcely to be denied that the note of monotheism is sounded in it. But is this so? Splendid as is the isolation of Sin's position here portrayed and ethical as are the qualities ascribed to him, we must not overlook the fact that other gods are mentioned beside him; nor again must we forget that hymns are still extant addressed in similar terms to several other deities, both male and female.[2] This constitutes the second

[1] Gressmann, *op. cit.* vol. i. pp. 80–81, ll. 1–35.

[2] Cp. Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, pp. 133-137.

and more important distinction between the psalms and hymns of the Babylonians and those of the Hebrews. And, thirdly, nowhere is there any mention of the loving kindness of God, which plays so prominent a part in the Hebrew Psalter.

We cannot, therefore, believe that Babylonian hymns and psalms exercised any real influence on the work of the Hebrew Psalmists. A few Babylonian poems reach a comparatively high level of thought, but the vast majority fail to do so; even the latent monotheism, if it may be so termed, exhibited by a Babylonian or Assyrian psalmist, is at bottom rather the enthusiasm of a devotee who is striving to exalt his favourite god or goddess to a pre-eminent position in the pantheon or the vague speculations of a philosopher rather than a matter of vital religion.[1] The monotheism of the Hebrew poet is, on the contrary, the outcome of a long and profound religious experience. Further, the religious literature of the Babylonians and Assyrians lacked that tremendous emphasis on ethics which is one of the outstanding features of Hebrew monotheism. The three great Semitic races, the Babylonians, the Hebrews and the Arabs, have all been gifted to a high degree with religious feeling but with very different capacities for religious development, and each moulded its own faith. The Arab, coming last in history, borrowed from his Hebrew predecessors and his Christian neighbours; for their religion was at least as pure as his own. But it is unlikely that the lower Babylonian can have exerted much influence on the higher religious literature of the Hebrews. The similarities between these two literatures to which I have here drawn attention are significant as shewing how alike was the diction and, superficially, the thought of these two great peoples; but how much more significant are the differences, both moral and spiritual! The same seed, indeed, was sown in the hearts of both races; but along what different lines did it grow to maturity and what different fruit did it bear!

[1] Cp. Wardle, *op. cit.* pp. 137-139.

Although, however, it is concluded that in general the Babylonian exerted but slight, if any, influence on the Hebrew Psalmists, what inferences are to be drawn from the detailed points of resemblance to which I have drawn attention? I am convinced that many, if not the majority, of them are the result of independent reflection; for it is possible to shew that not only a number of figures of speech but also certain definitely theological ideas recur in the religions and mythologies of other peoples who, as far as it is possible now to say, owe nothing to Babylon. Due allowance must therefore be made for the common instincts of mankind. Other phenomena of the same nature may well be referred to a common origin in that prehistoric period before the expansion of the Semites had driven them out of their primitive home to form separate nations; to this common parentage they owed languages more closely akin than any modern languages, except perhaps those of the Slavonic group, and certain natural characteristics, such as the instinct for religion and the commercial spirit. In the first class, then, I would put their conceptions of heaven, of the deity enthroned on a lofty mountain, and of the world below; in the second class all the terminology, both profane and theological, which is based on the proto-Semitic speech, those legends and myths which are demonstrably Semitic, and generally the impulse to give expression to spiritual reflection in psalms and hymns. But any opinion which may be expressed on such problems must always remain open to alteration or modification in the light of future discoveries. Nor must it be forgotten that, even if direct Babylonian influence is ruled out or disproved, there always remains the possibility of indirect influence from Babylon, which may have operated in several ways. The Hebrews themselves record in their own history the sojourning of their ancestors in Mesopotamia.[1] The Amorites, who gave Babylon her first dynasty, and who with other

[1] Genesis xi. 28-31; Joshua xxiv. 2.

Semitic races at various times acted as middlemen between the East and the West, must have helped in the diffusion of Babylonian mythology. The Babylonians, too, who overran Syria and Palestine in the days of that Sargon who made all the West to speak one language, may have left behind them after their withdrawal legends and stories which would have been passed down through the Canaanites and other native races to the later Hebrew immigrants. It is not always remembered, and is indeed a fact of no slight significance, that among the tablets found at Tall-ul-'Amarnâ were fragmentary texts of certain Babylonian legends, including that of Adapa; of this legend I have already noticed possible echoes in the Hebrew Psalter. This proves, therefore, that some Babylonian myths circulated among the Babylonians in Egypt in the fifteenth century B.C., and these must have found their way also into Palestine. Legends, therefore, which were not of native Semitic origin but of Sumerian or other origin, could have reached the Hebrews this way at an early period, and need not have been borrowed directly from Babylon in historical times. At the same time I have been able to shew that many idioms which superficially appear to be Babylonian probably go back to this Babylonian age in Palestine, and may even be Canaanite. Myths and legends indeed, especially those which, like the stories of the creation, unmistakably betray a polytheistic colouring, are far more likely to have taken hold of the people's imagination at that early time than long afterwards, when the religious and national feeling of the community was strongly against foreign innovations. Later, however, after the Northern and more so after the Southern kingdom had gone into captivity, when the Psalmists themselves had sat down by the waters of Babylon and hanged up their harps upon the trees that are therein, it is legitimate to look for direct Babylonian influence; and it may be found, I suggest, in such small things as the use of an Assyrian word for demons which the less spiritual

of the people may have learnt in and afterwards brought back with them from Babylonia. Those, therefore, who admit Babylonian influence wherever a word, a phrase or an idea reminds them of Babylon should reflect that illustration is not proof, and should beware of dating all those psalms where they find them in the exilic or post-exilic period. Let those, too, who shrink from seeing that which they have learnt to hold sacred traced back to a polytheistic origin bear in mind that not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man but that which cometh out of the mouth, that it is not origin but use that matters.

G. R Driver.

VII

THE PSALMS IN THE LIGHT OF EGYPTIAN RESEARCH

The thesis that many of the Hebrew Psalmists were indebted to Egyptian writers in regard to both literary form and religious content has for long been debated among specialists.[1] The further thesis that the author of the one hundred and fourth Psalm in particular derived his material from an Egyptian prototype has attracted widespread interest. Some scholars have urged that the Egyptian influence was only indirect; others have presupposed direct borrowing. An instance of the latter point of view in its extreme and most fantastic form is to be found in the contention that Amenōphis IV, better known as Ikhnaton, was practically the author of Ps. civ., a view championed by A. Weigall.[2] As compared with such 'pan-Egyptian' pre-suppositions, the 'diffusionist theory' of Professor Elliot Smith and Mr. W. J. Perry, though thoroughly unacceptable to me, is distinctly moderate.

The Egyptian documents which more especially contain the material for the examination of theories of this kind are two groups of Egyptian religious poems, dating the one from the Eighteenth, and the other from the Nineteenth Dynasty (*circa*

[1] See *e.g.* A. B. Mace, University of Liverpool: *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*, ix. pp. 3 ff.

[2] *Life and Times of Akhnaton*, 1923.

1550–1205 B. C.), a batch of Nineteenth Dynasty votive stelae found at Dêr el-Medînah, and a number of didactic writings dating mainly from the Ninth to Tenth Dynasties (*circa* 2445–2160 B. C.), but still read during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties by the educated.

We will first of all examine the evidence contained in the poems of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The famous Cairo *Hymn to Amūn*,[1] probably written, according to Erman,[2] in the reign of Amenōphis II (1447-1420 B. C.) contains a section that in language and sentiment is to be compared with vv. 14–18 of Ps. civ.:

> He who created herbs for the cattle,
> And the fruit tree for men;
> Who maketh that whereon live the fish in the stream,
> And the birds which (dwell) in the firmament,
> He who giveth breath to that which is in the egg,
> And maketh to live the son of the worm;
> He who maketh that whereon the gnats live,
> The worms and the flies likewise;
> He who maketh what the mice in their holes need,
> And sustaineth the birds on all the trees.

The verses in question in Ps. civ. are:

> He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
> And herb for the service of man;
> That He may bring forth food out of the earth:
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The trees of Jahveh are satisfied;
> The cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted;
> Where the birds make their nests:
> As for the stork, the fir trees are her house.
> The high mountains are for the wild goats;
> The rocks are a refuge for the conies.

[1] Grébaut, *Hymne à Ammon-Ra*, Paris, 1874; Erman, *Die Literatur der Aegypter*, pp. 350 ff.

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 350, note 1.

A hymn to the sun-god written for, or by, two brothers Suti and Hōr,[1] architects living in the reign of Amenōphis III (1411–1375 B. C.), throws a very strong light on the religious tendencies of the period. It speaks of the sun-god as the 'sole lord taking captive all lands every day, as one beholding them that walk therein.' The sun-god is thus regarded as a deity who, like Jahveh in the Psalms, exercises universal sway and possesses universal vision. Of this conception a trace is, in point of fact, already to be found in an inscription dating from the reign of Tethmōsis III (*circa* 1501–1447 B. C.), wherein that king says of Amunrē', 'he seeth the whole world hourly.'[2]

The god of the hymn of Suti and Hōr is not only the all-powerful, all-seeing ruler, he is also the beneficent protector and sustainer of mankind—'the valiant herdsman who driveth his cattle, their refuge and the giver of their sustenance.' This hymn also emphasises the god's beneficent nature by calling him 'a mother, profitable to gods and men,' and finally asserts that he is the source of all, including his own, being: 'Thou art the craftsman shaping thine own limbs; fashioner without being fashioned.'

The sun-god, in the person of Amunrē', also plays the rôle of the good shepherd or herdsman in the Cairo *Hymn*:

'Praise to thee, who maketh all this! Sole one with the many hands. One that watcheth the night through, when all people are asleep, and seeketh out the best for his cattle.'

These hymns shew (1) that the religious thought of the period immediately preceding the reign of Amenōphis IV was distinctly monotheistic in tendency, and also (2) that the conception of the All-Father, the source of all life, who lovingly makes provision for all his creatures and is the good herds-

[1] Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 315 ff.

[2] *Op. cit.* p. 313.

man of mankind, was already current among the educated Egyptians.

The passages in Amenōphis IV's *Hymn to the Sun*,[1] which are often compared with parts of Ps. civ., are as follows:

When thou goest down in the western horizon,
The earth is in darkness as if it were dead. . . .
Every lion cometh forth from his den,
And all snakes that bite. . . .
When it is dawn and thou risest in the horizon and shinest
as the sun in the day,
Thou dispellest the darkness and sheddest thy beams.
The two lands keep festival, awake, and stand on their feet,
For thou hast raised them up.
They wash their bodies,
They take their clothes,
Their hands (are uplifted) in adoration to thy rising.
The whole land doeth its work.

With these words compare:

Thou makest darkness, and it is night;
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their meat from God.
The sun ariseth, they get them away,
And lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his work
And to his labour until the evening. (Ps. civ. 20–23.)

With:

The ships voyage down and up stream likewise,
Every way is open because thou risest.
The fishes in the river leap up before thy face;
Thy rays are in the great green sea. . . .

compare:

Yonder is the sea, great and wide,
Wherein are things creeping innumerable,

[1] See Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El-Amarna*, vi. pl. xxvii.; Erman, *op. cit.* pp. 358 ff.

Both small and great beasts.
There go the ships;
There is leviathan, whom Thou hast formed to take his pastime therein. (Ps. civ. 25, 26.)

With the lines:

How manifold are thy works,
They are hidden from me,
O sole god, to whom none is to be likened. . . .

and :

The earth is in thy hand,
For thou hast made them.
When thou arisest they live,
When thou settest they die.
Thou art life in thyself,
Men live through thee.
The eyes look on thy beauty,
Until thou settest,

compare:

O Jahveh, how manifold are Thy works!
In wisdom Thou hast made them all:
. . . . . .
These wait all upon Thee,
That Thou mayest give them their meat in due season.
That Thou givest unto them they gather;
Thou openest Thine hand, they are satisfied with good.
Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled;
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created;
And Thou renewest the face of the ground.
(Ps. civ. 24, 27–30.)

With the two lines in this hymn of Amenōphis IV,

Thou openest his mouth in speech,
Thou suppliest his needs,

may perhaps be compared:

Thou openest Thine hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing. (Ps. cxlv. 16.)

Lastly, the section,

> All cattle are content with their pasture,
> The trees and plants flourish.
> The birds fly out of their nests,
> Their wings (raised) in adoration to thee.
> All wild small cattle dance on their feet,
> All that fly and flutter—
> They live when thou risest for them,

closely resembles Ps. civ. 14–18 already mentioned in connection with the Cairo *Hymn to Amūn*.

The group of Nineteenth Dynasty hymns are imbued with exactly the same spirit as many of the Hebrew Psalms, a spirit that displays itself in a belief in God's justice, a trust in Him in time of trouble, a consciousness of sin, a personal love for Him, a desire for what may almost be termed familiar intercourse with Him, and in the feeling that He loves the humble, that indeed only the possessor of a humble and loving heart can approach Him. In these hymns the sun-god appears as the good herdsman and as the judge of the poor, two rôles frequently assigned to Jahveh in the Psalms.

The writer of the following hymn[1] longs for quiet intercourse with the god of wisdom, and realises that this is only vouchsafed to the 'silent' or 'humble' one. The proud and headstrong cannot find God.

> O Thōth, place me in Hermopolis,
> In thy city where life is pleasant.
> Thou suppliest all I need of food and drink,
> And thou keepest watch over my mouth when I speak. . . .
> Ah, may Thōth succour me to-morrow!
> Come to me, when I enter the presence of the Lords of Right,
> And (so will I) go out justified.
>
> Thou great dôm-palm sixty cubits in height!
> Thou on whom are fruits!
> Stones are in the fruits,
> And water is in the stones.

[1] *Pap. Sallier*, i. 8. 2 ff.; Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 154 f.

Thou who bringest water to a place afar off,
Come, deliver me, the silent one!
Thōth, the sweet well for one that thirsteth in the wilderness!
It is closed for him that findeth words to say.
It is open for the silent.
The silent cometh and findeth the well.
The hot-headed cometh—but thou art choked.

The conception that it is to the silent and contemplative worshipper that God reveals Himself appears also in the *Proverbs of Anii*, a work possibly composed as late as the Twenty-first Dynasty (1090–945 B. C.).

The passage in question [1] is:

'The sanctuary of God, it abhorreth clamour. Pray with a loving heart, in which all the words remain hidden. Then he doeth what thou requirest; he heareth thy words and accepteth thine offering.'

In this section of a hymn to Amūn [2] the writer expresses his love for the god and also his belief that he will not fail him in the day of trouble:

O Amūn, I love thee and I trust in thee . . .
Thou wilt deliver me from the mouth of man
In the day wherein he speaketh lies . . .
I follow not the care in my heart;
What Amūn hath said cometh to pass.

In another section of the same hymn Amūn appears in the rôle of the good herdsman and also in that of the experienced pilot:

Amūn, thou herdsman, who early seest after the cows,
Who leadest the patient to the pasture!
The herdsman driveth the cows to the pasture;
O Amūn, so thou drivest the patient to (their) bread.
For Amūn is an herdsman, an herdsman that is not idle.

[1] Erman, *op. cit.* p. 296. [2] *Ibid.* p. 382.

Thou pilot, who knowest the water!
Amūn, thou rudder . . .
Thou experienced one, who knowest the shoal,
Who art longed after by him who is on the water!
Amūn is present when one longeth after him upon the water.

In two other hymns[1] Amūn is the judge who defends the cause of the poor:

Amūn, lend thine ear to one that standeth alone in the court of justice,
That is poor and his (adversary) is rich!
The tribunal oppresseth him:—
'Silver and gold for the scribes,
Clothes for the attendants!'
But it is found that Amūn changeth himself into the vizier,
In order to cause the poor man to overcome.
So it is found that the poor man is justified,
And the poor man passeth by the rich.

The vizier of the poor.
He taketh not unrighteous reward,
He speaketh not to him that bringeth testimony,
And looketh not on him that maketh promises (?).
Amunrē' judgeth the earth with his finger,
And speaketh to the heart.

These words from a hymn to Rē'-Harakhti[2] might easily have been written by a Hebrew:

Punish me not for my many sins,
I am one that knoweth not himself (?),
I am a witless man.
All day long I follow my mouth,
Like an ox after fodder.

Ps. lxxiii. 22 immediately comes to one's mind:

So brutish was I, and ignorant;
I was as a beast before Thee.

[1] Erman, *op. cit.* p. 380. [2] *Ibid.* p. 379.

With regard to the group of Nineteenth Dynasty votive stelae,[1] extracts from one inscription will suffice. It is the longest and also thoroughly typical.

The dedicator of the stela was a draughtsman of the Theban necropolis named Nebrē‘, who lived in the reign of Ramesses II (1292–1225 B. C.). His son Nekhtamūn had been sick unto death, his sickness being due, so it was supposed, to his having stolen a cow belonging to Amūn.[2] The son confessed his sin, the father prayed to Amūn for mercy, and the son recovered. Hence the votive stela, which was set up in a small temple much resorted to by the work-people of the Theban necropolis:

I will make him (*i.e.* Amūn) hymns in his name.
I will give him praise up to the height of heaven:
And over the breadth of the earth.
I will declare his might to him who fareth down-stream:
And to him who fareth up-stream.

. . . . . .

Thou art Amūn, the Lord of him that is silent:
Who comest at the voice of the humble man.
I call upon thee when I am in distress:
And thou comest that thou mayest save me;
That thou mayest give breath to him that is wretched;
That thou mayest save me that am in bondage.

. . . . . .

He (Nebrē‘) made hymns to his name,
Because of the greatness of his power:
He made humble entreaties before him,
In the presence of the whole land,
For the draughtsman Nekhtamūn,
Who lay sick unto death,
Who was (under) the might of Amūn, through his sin.

I found that the Lord of Gods came as the North-wind, . .
That he might save the draughtsman, Nekhtamūn . . .

[1] Gunn, *Journ. of Egyptian Archaeology*, iii. pp. 81 ff.

[2] Erman, *op. cit.* p. 383, note 2.

He said:

Though the servant was disposed to do evil,
Yet is the Lord disposed to be merciful.
The Lord of Thebes passeth not an whole day wroth:
His wrath is finished in a moment, and nought is left.
The wind is turned to us in mercy.
Amūn turns with his air.

. . . . . .

I will make this memorial in thy name:
And establish for thee this hymn in writing upon it.
For thou didst save me the draughtsman, Nekhtamūn. . . .

The likeness which this inscription bears to the penitential Psalms is so obvious that it is unnecessary to comment upon it at any great length. One cannot, however, omit to draw attention to the parallel between:

Thou art Amūn, the Lord of him that is silent,
Who comest at the voice of the humble man.
I call upon thee when I am in distress,
And thou comest that thou mayest save me,

and

This poor man cried, and Jahveh heard him,
And saved him out of all his troubles. (Ps. xxxiv. 6.)

Also the words:

The Lord of Thebes passeth not a whole day wroth:
His wrath is finished in a moment and nought is left,

may well be compared with :

For His anger is but for a moment;
In His favour is life:
Weeping may tarry for the night,
But joy cometh in the morning. (Ps. xxx. 5.)

It should be pointed out that there is no truth whatsoever in statements frequently made in text-books and elsewhere to the effect that the religious attitude which is displayed in this inscription and in the passages from hymns quoted above

disappeared after the Nineteenth Dynasty. As we have seen, it still survives in the *Proverbs of Anii*, which may have been composed as late as 1000 B. C., while the recently published *Proverbs of Amenemōpe*,[1] of the same or even of later date, is full of praise of humility, and emphasises God's justice and loving-kindness, and definitely inculcates the idea of man's sinfulness.[2]

Now let us turn to the group of didactic writings dating mostly from the Ninth to Tenth Dynasties. These, as already pointed out, were still being used as standard works of instruction in the schools of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties. I propose to confine the present discussion to inferences that can be drawn from the contents of the following:

The Instruction (of King Akhthoi ?) for his son Merikerē',
The Eloquent Peasant,
The Admonitions of Ipuwer,
and *The Prophecy of Neferrōhu.*

The following passage from the *Instruction for Merikerē'*[3] demands that a king should display qualities which, among the Egyptians and Hebrews alike, were regarded as specifically royal ones, namely righteousness (or truth) and justice.

'Speak thou truth (or right) in thine house, that the nobles who are upon earth may fear thee. Uprightness of heart becometh the sovereign. . . . Do justice, that thou mayest endure upon earth. Calm the weeper. Oppress not the widow. Expel no man from the possessions of his father. Degrade not magistrates from their post. Take heed lest thou punish wrongfully.'

The king's officers must display the same regard for justice and right as their royal master. Accordingly in the *Eloquent*

[1] Lange, *Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope*, Copenhagen, 1925.

[2] Lange, *op. cit.* p. 98.

[3] Gardiner, *Journ. of Egyptian Archaeology*, i. p. 26.

Peasant,[1] Rensi is told that he should be 'a ruler void of rapacity, a magnate void of baseness, a destroyer of falsehood, a fosterer of justice, one who cometh at the voice of him that calleth.'

In the same work we read that 'This goodly speech,' namely, 'Speak justice, and do justice; for it is mighty, it is great; it endureth long . . . it bringeth unto revered old age,' has 'come forth from the mouth of Rē' himself.'[2]

Again Rensi is bidden to 'take heed to the approach of eternity.' 'Will to live long,' says the peasant to him, 'according to the saying: "The doing of justice is the breath of life."'[3]

'But justice,' says the peasant again, 'shall be unto everlasting. It goeth down into the necropolis with him that doeth it; he is buried and the earth envelopeth him; and his name is not obliterated upon earth, but he is remembered for goodness.'[4]

In the *Admonitions of Ipuwer* that sage is represented as contrasting the disastrous reign of an aged and weak king, probably Piōpi II, the last king of the Sixth Dynasty, with that of the ideal king, the sun-god. He speaks of the sun-god as the 'herdsman of all men, with no evil in his heart. His herd is diminished, and yet (?) hath he spent the day in order to tend them.' 'Where is he to-day?' he asks. 'Doth he sleep perchance? Behold his might is not seen!'[5]

These words perhaps suggest that the sage is longing either for the return of the sun-god to rule once more over the earth, or for the advent of a king whose sway will be beneficent like that of his divine prototype.

The *Prophecy of Neferrōhu*,[6] another work of the same character, but dating from a somewhat later period, the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty (*circa* 2000 B. C.), definitely predicts

[1] Gardiner, *Journ. of Egyptian Archaeology*, ix. p. 9.
[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 19 f. [3] *Ibid.* p. 13. [4] *Ibid.* pp. 19 f.
[5] Gardiner, *Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, p. 78.
[6] Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, i. pp. 100 ff.

the rule of a righteous king. For a long time the land will be in dire distress, but at last, when he shall come to reign, 'the people of his time shall rejoice. They that turn to mischief, that devise rebellion, shall subdue their mouthings through fear of him. . . . And right shall come into its place, and iniquity be cast (?) forth. He will rejoice who shall behold and who shall serve the king.'

The conception of God as the good herdsman or shepherd appears also in the *Instruction for Merikarē'*. In a passage[1] eulogising God as the author of all existence and well-being, men are spoken of as 'the flocks of God.' 'God,' the writer then goes on to say, 'made heaven and earth at their (men's) desire. He checked the greed of the water and made the air to give life to their nostrils. They (men) are his own images proceeding from his flesh. He ariseth in heaven at their desire. He made for them grass and cattle, fowl and flesh to nourish them. . . . He maketh the dawn at their desire. He saileth by (in the celestial solar ship) in order to see them. . . . When they weep he heareth. . . . How hath he slain the froward of heart? Even as a man smiteth a son for his brother's sake. For God knoweth every man.'

This description of God's care for the human race brings to one's mind Ps. viii. 3–8:

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained;
What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?

. . . . . .

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

[1] *Ibid.* i. p. 34.

Finally it should be noted that in the section previous to the one just quoted we are told that 'more acceptable (to the sun-god) is one righteous of heart than the ox of one that worketh iniquity.'[1] With these words compare:

Sacrifice and offering Thou hast no delight in;
Mine ears hast Thou opened:
Burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required.
Then said I, Lo, I am come;
In the roll of the book it is written of me:
I delight to do Thy will, O my God;
Yea, Thy law is within my heart. (Ps. xl. 6–8.)

and:

For Thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.
(Ps. li. 16–17.)

and:

I will magnify Him with thanksgiving.
And it shall please Jahveh better than an ox,
Or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.
(Ps. lxix. 31.)

The same sentiment is also expressed in 1 Sam. xv. 22:

Hath Jahveh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of Jahveh?
Behold to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to hearken than the fat of rams.

Many of the conceptions occurring in these Egyptian didactic writings and poems undeniably find close parallels in the writings of the Psalmists. In both, great emphasis is laid on justice and judgment as qualities alike of the deity and of the

[1] Gardiner, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, i. p. 34.

king.[1] Both teach God's hatred of sin, His forgiveness of sins repented of, His preferring righteousness to sacrifice, His love and care for mankind and all His creatures, and His solicitude for the poor and distressed; both represent God in the rôle of the good shepherd or herdsman; and both, though the Hebrew writings much more frequently and emphatically foretell the coming of the king who will reign in righteousness.

Are all these similarities and parallels to be put on one side as being the results of mere chance? Or, should we adopt the view that they are in some measure due to the fact that the Hebrew literary classes at some time or other came, directly or indirectly, under Egyptian influence? If this latter view is adopted, a further question presents itself: At what period or periods was this influence exercised?

Dr. Gressmann, to mention only one of the leading authorities on the Old Testament who admit the influence of Egypt on Hebrew thought, argues that the verses of Ps. civ., which I have already quoted, are certainly derived from Egyptian prototypes, and that they came into Hebrew psalmody through the medium of Phoenicia. Hence the mention of the Lebanon and its cedars, and hence also the transformation of what is really a description of the Nile with its ships and crocodiles into a description of the Mediterranean in which, of course, there are no crocodiles. The Egyptian originals of those verses must have formed parts of a hymn similar to that of Amenōphis IV, or to the Cairo *Hymn to Amūn*. There can be little doubt that many such hymns were composed during the Eighteenth Dynasty. One or more of them may have been employed in the temple-worship at Byblos, the port at the foot of the Lebanon, which, during the Old Kingdom was, to all intents and purposes, an Egyptian colony. During the Old, the Middle, and the New Kingdoms an Egyptian temple seems to have been in

[1] Peters, *The Psalms as Liturgies*, p. 271.

existence there.[1] At the end of the Twentieth Dynasty Byblos still maintained close trade and cultural relations with Egypt, as can be seen from the *Adventure of Unamūn*.[2] In process of time these hymns, or *motifs* from these hymns, would be taken over and adapted to the natural features of the country by the native Phoenician singers. These latter, may, in their turn, have passed them on to the Hebrews either during the reign of Solomon, when Hiram's workmen built for him the temple of Jahveh at Jerusalem—a building distinctly Egyptian in its plan and in its sacrificial accessories—or during the reign of Ahab, whose Phoenician wife,[3] Jezebel, is known to have favoured the introduction of Phoenician religious and political ideas.

In their ideas about God and about the intimate relationship that men may cultivate with Him, which are to be found in their contemporary and earlier literary works, the Egyptians of the Eighteenth to Nineteenth Dynasties were far in advance of the Hebrews of the earlier monarchical period. Such ideas do not seem to have prevailed among any considerable section of them before the latter half of the eighth century B. C., the time of Amos, Isaiah, and Hezekiah.

Professor Gressmann holds[4] that chs. xxv.–xxix. of the Book of Proverbs date from the reign of Hezekiah, and that the proverbs contained therein were indeed collected 'by the men of Hezekiah.'[5] He has also shewn that there are good grounds for supposing that the proverbs contained in chs. xxii. 17–xxiii. 11, and in certain other portions of Proverbs, date from the same period. Professor Erman has proved that most of these verses of the Book of Proverbs are almost literal translations of

[1] *Journ. of Egyptian Archaeology*, ix. p. 212; Hubert, *Syria*, pp. 16 ff.; Breasted, *History of Egypt*, p. 323. London, 1906.

[2] Erman, *Literatur*, pp. 225 ff.

[3] 1 Kings xvi. 31.

[4] *Israels Spruchweisheit im Zusammenhang der Weltliteratur*, pp. 33 ff.

[5] Prov. xxv. 1.

portions of an Egyptian work, the *Proverbs of Amenemōpe*,[1] composed about 1000 B.C.

Now by the time of Hezekiah the archaistic revival in Egypt, which reached its culmination in the Saitic Period, had already begun. This revival manifested itself not only in a return to the art-traditions of the Old Kingdom, but also in a love for recopying old writings and inscriptions, and in the composition of new writings and texts in Middle Egyptian, which was the classical language.

It is more than likely, therefore, that the treatises and poems of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasties, and of the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties as well, were being re-read and copied in the Egyptian writing-schools of this period. Through the medium of the Semitic scribes employed in Egypt,[2] who had no doubt studied Egyptian and learnt to write it in the Egyptian writing-schools,[3] many of the ideas and literary artifices contained in these works passed into Palestine. Extracts from these works, which possibly began to filter through into Palestine before the reign of Hezekiah,[4] may well have stimulated, though not necessarily have initiated, the reform movement in Judah. Such Egyptian influences, owing to the political relations of Judah with Egypt, would be particularly strong during the reign

[1] Erman, *Eine ägyptische Quelle der 'Spruche Salomos,'* in *Sitzungberichte der preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1924, xv. pp. 36 ff.; Professor Griffith, *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, vol. xii., and D. C. Simpson, *The Hebrew Book of Proverbs and the Teaching of Amenophis*, in this year's issue of the same journal.

[2] See Gressman, *op. cit.* p. 50.

[3] It is to be noted that not only our much quoted Nineteenth Dynasty hymns, but the great bulk of the Egyptian literary works that we possess, have been preserved in the shape of schoolboys' writing exercises.

[4] The Archaistic revival must have begun before the time of Piankhi (728–715), for his famous stela of victory is written in excellent Middle Egyptian.

of Hezekiah. They would again become active a century later when Judah was once more free from Assyrian domination.

The fact that no Twenty-fifth to Twenty-sixth Dynasty copies of the Nineteenth Dynasty hymns and the earlier treatises are now in existence, does not mean that those works were not being read and copied at that period. We know, indeed, that one book at least, of a far earlier date than the Ninth to Tenth Dynasties, was copied during the reign of Shabaka.[1] A work similar to the *Prophecy of Neferrōhu*, but dating from the Eighteenth or Nineteenth Dynasty, was current even in the Greek period, for we possess a Greek translation of it.[2] And the copy which we possess of the *Proverbs of Amenemōpe*, composed as already stated about 1000 B. C., is, according to Professor Griffith,[3] as late as the seventh century B. C., or even a hundred or two hundred years later.

Before the present investigation is brought to a close, attention should be drawn to certain passages, or portions of passages scattered about the Psalms, which may display Egyptian influence.

There seem to me to be three possible instances of such influence in Ps. i. Verse 3 reads:

> And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
> That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
> Whose leaf also doth not wither;
> And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Practically the same simile is used of the 'truly humble' man in the *Proverbs of Amenemōpe*,[4] which, as we have seen, probably became known to the Hebrews about the time of Hezekiah:

'The truly humble, when he holdeth himself aloof, he is as a tree planted in a garden. It is green and doubleth its yield;

[1] Erman, *Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie*, in *Sitzungsberichte der konigl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1911, pp. 916 ff.

[2] Gardiner, *Journ. of Egyptian Archaeology*, i. p. 101.

[3] *Ibid.* ix. p. 208.

[4] Lange, *op. cit.* pp. 42 f.

it is in front of its lord. Its fruits are sweet, its shade pleasant. It findeth its end in the grove.'

As Professor Gressmann has pointed out,[1] the Egyptian origin of this simile is made the more certain by the appearance of another instance of Egyptian influence in the next verse but one,

> Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,
> (Ps. i. 5.)

the only occurrence in the Psalms of any reference to the posthumous judgment, and one of the reasons for critics hitherto assigning this Psalm to the third century B. C.[2]

The third possible trace of Egyptian influence in Ps. i. is to be found in the words of v. 2,

> And in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Are they reminiscent of the exhortations addressed to would-be scribes that occur more than once in Egyptian school-texts of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties :[3] 'Give heed to writing by day and read by night'?

The words which occur in two royal Psalms:

> He asked life of Thee, Thou gavest it him;
> Even length of days for ever and ever. (Ps. xxi. 4.)

and:

> Let him prolong his days with the sun. (Ps. xxii. 5.)

have a distinctly Egyptian ring about them. It should suffice to point out that the Pharaoh is regularly spoken of as having been 'given life for ever and ever,' or assigned 'myriads of years,' or 'the duration of Rē' (the sun-god) in heaven.'

The words:

> . . . The precious oil upon the head,
> That ran down upon the beard,
> Even Aaron's beard;
> That came down upon the skirt of his garments,
> (Ps. cxxxiii. 2.)

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 32. [2] Peters, *op. cit.* p. 91.

[3] Erman, *Literatur der Aegypter*, p. 249; see also Blackman and Peet, *Journ. of Egypt. Archaeology*, xi. p. 285, and cf. p. 293.

suggest that the Egyptian custom of placing a lump of scented grease on the heads of guests at banquets and on the heads of participants in other festivities must have spread to Palestine. In Egyptian wall-paintings of the New Kingdom the robes of banqueters thus anointed are covered with wavy yellow lines, shewing where the melted unguent has trickled down from the brow. In these paintings, too, one servant is shewn anointing the guests with dabs of grease, while another servant fills their cups with wine. Such actions are described in Ps. xxiii. 5:

> Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
> My cup runneth over.

Now to what causes are we to attribute this particular trend of religious thought in Egypt during the New Kingdom? It may well have been due, in part at any rate, to the fact that the population of the Nile Valley from the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty until the end of the reign of Rameses III (1580–1167 B. C.) was becoming, almost every year, more and more infused with Semitic blood, and, in consequence, with Semitic ideas. In this connection it is noteworthy that the literary activity of the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties, which produced so great an abundance of remarkable works, was preceded by an irruption of Semites, who at one time occupied the Eastern Delta as far south as Athritis.[1] Moreover, the idea of sin and the recognition of the necessity for divine mercy, which we encounter for the first time in the Nineteenth Dynasty hymns and inscribed votive stelae from Dêr el-Medînah, is distinctly Semitic and quite unlike what we are accustomed to regard as the normal Egyptian attitude, which was to deny having ever committed sins at all.

But granted the truth of this hypothesis of Semitic influence upon Egyptian thought within these narrow but important limits—and I am inclined definitely to accept it—care must be taken not to generalise from it, unless adequate evidence is

[1] Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples*, pp. 44 f.

forthcoming to shew that in other respects Egypt was indebted to the Semitic world. To do so would be to err in the direction of subordinating the importance of native Egyptian to that of Semitic thought with as little justification as Weigall, Elliot Smith and Perry underestimate the original contributions of other nations towards the world's civilisation in order to leave Egypt supreme. The truth seems to lie between the two extremes, and in a frank admission that Egypt was indeed indebted to the Semitic world for certain ideas, and that the Semitic world was in other respects indebted to Egypt.

It will be best, therefore, to sum up in the following terms. The sum total of the Egyptians' outlook on life and religion included two important constituents. On the one hand there was their realisation of the fact of sin and the need for forgiveness; that was of Semitic origin. On the other hand there were native Egyptian qualities of mind such as a genuine appreciation for the beauties of nature, a love for all living things, even for hippopotami and crocodiles, cheerfulness, a sense of fun, great sociability, and remarkable kindness of heart. It was the presence and combination of these constituents in Egyptian civilisation and religion which was responsible for the remarkable religious outlook of the period of the Eighteenth and following Dynasties, an outlook so closely resembling that of the Psalmists that it can almost be said that the Songs of Sion were being sung in a strange land before they were sung in Sion herself.

A. M. Blackman.

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The Psalmists

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